

Town of Wethersfield

2000 Plan of Conservation & Development



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Adopted June 15, 1999

Wethersfield Planning & Zoning Commission

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Introduction

Vision Statement

- Wethersfield shall remain a thriving community, a desirable place to live, work, run a business, go to school and raise a family.
- We place high value on our community's esthetics, historic heritage, educational excellence and commitment to public safety.
- Our citizens shall receive efficient, effective, and affordable services from municipal employees who care, and who share our love for Wethersfield.
- We encourage and support volunteerism.
- We seek to maximize our town's economic potential.
- We adapt to challenges in a spirit of cooperation, innovation and good will.

(Excerpted from the 1995 Strategic Plan)

Purpose of the 2000-2010 Town Plan

The 2000-2010 Town of Wethersfield Plan of Conservation and Development will act as the Town Planning and Zoning-official policy guide for future development related actions. The Plan provides a general and long range picture of how Wethersfield wishes to develop over the next ten years. The Plan is a policy document and provides a vision of Wethersfield and strategies for realizing this vision.

Authority for the Plan

This plan is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 126, Section 8-23. This statute requires that the Plan include the following components:

- Statement of policies, goals and standards for physical and economic development.
- Consideration for the need for affordable housing.
- Recommendations for the most desirable use of land for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes.
- Recommendations for the most desirable density of the population.
- Consideration for the protection of existing and potential public surface and groundwater drinking supplies.
- Addresses the recommendations of the State Plan of Conservation and Development.

Using the 2000-2001 Plan of Conservation & Development

The Planning and Zoning Commission will use the Plan as a guide when:

- Considering applications to amend the zoning regulations and to amend the zone district boundaries.
- Preparing reports on Section 8-24 mandatory referral requests from the Town Council.
- Reviewing and preparing reports on inter-town zoning and subdivision referrals to the Capitol Region Council of Governments.
- Reviewing and commenting on the Capital Improvement Budget.

The Town Council and other town boards and commissions will also find the plan relevant. For example, the Town Council may wish to consider the plan when making decisions on the acquisition or disposition of land.

Regional Context

Location

Wethersfield covers 13.0 square miles on the west bank of the Connecticut River, immediately south of Hartford. The Berlin Turnpike and Interstate 91 connect the town to the regional highway system. The major local roads such as the Silas Deane Highway and Ridge Road are extensions of the Hartford road system, which led to the early suburban pattern of development in the town. Almost all of the available land is now developed and the town has a population of approximately 25,095 people.

Regional Plans

The State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 1998-2003 designated Wethersfield as an Urban Area – Neighborhood Conservation Area. The area west of I-91 and the area east of I-91 and south of Maple Street were designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern – Preservation Area. This plan reflects Wethersfield's role as an adjacent suburb of Hartford and suggests continued preservation of the Connecticut River flood plain.

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Plan of Development for the Capitol Region was adopted in April of 1988. The plan for the Capitol Region closely reflected existing land use patterns. The Land Use – Natural Resource and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Component included policy statements which called for discouraging development in the flood plain and for preserving flood plain areas.

Plans of Neighboring Towns

The City of Hartford and the Towns of East Hartford, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and Newington surround Wethersfield. East Hartford and Glastonbury are separated by the Connecticut River and thus have less direct relationship with Wethersfield.

Hartford – The 1996 Hartford Plan of Development designated the area west of Wethersfield Avenue as a low-density residential area. The area east of Wethersfield Avenue was designated as a Commercial and Industrial area. The 1991 Parks Master Plan called for a continued investment and improvements to Goodwin Park in Wethersfield.

East Hartford – The 1988 East Hartford Plan of Development called for the preservation of the flood plain on the east side of the Connecticut River and designated it as Undeveloped Open Space.

Glastonbury – The 1995 Glastonbury Plan of Conservation and Development called for the continued preservation of the Great Meadows on the east side of the Connecticut River and designated the meadows as a Flood Plain area.

Rocky Hill – The Town of Rocky Hill has begun the process to update the 1985 Plan of Development. The 1985 Rocky Hill Plan of Development called for residential development in the area west of the I-291 right-of-way. The plan called for the development of the I-291 right-of-way as a town park. The majority of I-291 right-of-way was designated as a Redevelopment area.

and has been developed with various types of elderly housing. The area adjacent to the Silas Deane Highway was designated as a General Commercial area. A small area on the east side of I-91 was designated as Open Space area. The remaining area east of I-91 was designated as a Flood Plain area.

Newington – The Town of Newington completed the Plan of Conservation and Development in 1996. The plan designated the Balf property as Industrial, Cedar Crest Hospital as Institutional and the parcel south of the hospital as Residential. The area north of Prospect Street is designated as Commercial while the area south of Prospect Street west of Back Lane is designated as Residential.

History

Historic Perspective

Wethersfield has been planning for its growth and development in a formal manner for over half a century. The town is of course much older officially, and steeped in history. Wethersfield was settled in 1634 and is the oldest town in Connecticut.

The Connecticut River proved to be early Wethersfield's economic mainstay. From its roots in the seventeenth century to the early 1800s the town remained an important shipping point on the River. The original town center developed in the area of Marsh and Main Streets.

With the development of the railroad in the early nineteenth century, shipping declined sharply and Wethersfield became largely an agricultural community. Due to its pleasant surroundings, easily worked land and proximity to the Hartford business center, Wethersfield began to grow as a residential community. It changed from a rural farm area to an extremely attractive suburban area, immediately outside of the Hartford City limits.

Now Wethersfield presents itself as a mature, well-rounded community. Because of its long history the town's neighborhoods have developed their own identities and in the subdivisions built during this century colonial themes are often repeated.

Past Plans

The concept of planned growth and development is not new to Wethersfield. Zoning regulations were adopted on May 24, 1926 and the first Master Plan was prepared in 1928. Herbert Swan, the city planner who compiled Wethersfield's first Master Plan, wrote in 1928:

"If the town capitalizes its location as to residence in an ever widening urban community through the substitution of intelligent direction and plan for hit-or-miss, haphazard growth, the development of the town will rise above the mediocre, its character will become progressively more distinctive and distinguishable from that of neighboring suburbs, and the growth of the municipality will quicken and accelerate at an increasing rate."

What one notices in Wethersfield today — the planting strips which line the major thoroughfares, the extensive open space and park system throughout the town, the preservation of the historic district and floodplain, and the distinctive characteristics of its neighborhoods — find their origin in the recommendations of the 1928 Plan.

The Town Plan Commission prepared a new Master Plan in 1946. The 1946 Plan laid the foundation for Wethersfield's transition from a small rural town to a modern suburban community. The Plan included recommendations for the future development and location of the town government centre, schools, recreation facilities, highways and streets and public utilities.

The Town Plan Commission in August 1963 prepared the Report on Detailed Studies Plan of Development. The report analyzed ongoing development trends and proposed new land use patterns and implementation techniques for achieving the kind of town desired by residents. The Plan was used as an overall guide for future public and private development.

The Planning and Zoning Commission updated the 1963 Plan of Development in 1972. The 1972 Plan noted that, “many changes have occurred both within Wethersfield and in the wider community, which were unforeseen at the time the 1963 Plan was adopted.” The 1972 Plan included such new topics as a traffic study and environmental quality proposals. Again many of the issues discussed in the earlier plans remained relevant and the following new concerns were added:

- Safeguarding the environment from the trend toward urbanization in Wethersfield.
- Preservation of the historic district as well as buildings of historic significance lying outside of Old Wethersfield.
- Creation of a new town center.
- Improvement of existing thoroughfares and the creation of new mass transit facilities utilizing abandoned rail lines.
- Controlling the spread of strip commercial development along the Silas Deane Highway.

The Planning and Zoning Commission updated the 1972 Plan of Development in 1983. The 1983 Plan of Development included a number of policy recommendations consistent with the issues raised in 1972.

The recommendations included:

- Development of a pedestrian system connecting the various open spaces, recreation areas and wetlands bordering streams and ponds throughout the town.
- Establishment of design controls or guidelines to help protect and preserve the built and natural environment of Wethersfield.
- Expansion of the existing Town Hall to create a Town Hall area along the Silas Deane Highway.
- Development of a formal recreation area at the 1860 Reservoir.
- Adaptive reuse of older, vacant and underutilized properties for housing.
- Provide modest price housing for the elderly, the young and the individual by use of accessory apartments.
- Make public improvements needed to facilitate vehicular or pedestrian access, improve street lighting, provide planting or other improvements to enhance visual quality.
- Provide incentives, financial mechanisms and guidelines for redevelopment of underdeveloped commercial property.
- Utilize zoning or planning devices as needed to reinforce or extend existing commercial areas and to be sure those individual areas are incorporated in the overall town fabric and not isolated or abandoned.
- Develop tourism as a means to expand the town's commercial base.

In early 1994, Mayor Daniel Camilliere appointed a Strategic Planning Committee, giving it the charge to provide Wethersfield with a road map to a better future, one that acknowledged the value of grass-roots citizen participation, that sought to preserve

what has always been good about Wethersfield, and that could identify and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead.

More than 100 people from all over town, representing all age groups and virtually all interests, worked hard to develop goals, objectives, and strategies for some of the major issues facing the town today and in the future. The plan developed the following five areas of concern with appropriate mission statements:

- **Economic Development** – To attract and retain an appropriate mix of business for the purpose of increasing the tax base and employment opportunities in Wethersfield.
- **Environmental Concerns** – Identify those environmental factors, which contribute to the quality of life in Wethersfield and implement a plan to maintain and improve its unique sense of place.
- **Government Process and Structure** – To identify, analyze, and recommend effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible government process and structure, which support desirable governmental services delivered to the townspeople.
- **Public Services** – To identify and implement ways in which the Town of Wethersfield can best develop, maintain, and utilize its facilities to deliver the highest level of public services to the townspeople.
- **Social Concerns** – Create an environment that would encourage and support all segments of Wethersfield's population by providing safety and security, by preserving and fostering the quality of life, and by encouraging opportunities and individual freedoms.

The 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development

The updating of the 1983 Plan of Development began in 1996 with a series of neighborhood meetings and the preparation of neighborhood profiles. The components of the plan were updated and public hearings were held on each updated component.

The neighborhood meetings and the component public hearings identified a number of pertinent issues including:

- Encourage the highest and best use of existing commercial and industrial properties.
- Protect and improve the quality of life in residential neighborhoods and encourage new types of residential development.
- Preserve existing open space and agricultural lands.
- Enhance the town's visual image as a way to attract and retain businesses.
- Preserve the remaining portion of the Tri-Town Connector for future development as an east–west roadway.
- Connect open spaces, recreation areas, wetlands, ponds and the Connecticut River with a bicycle path and walkway.
- Preserve and enhance the town's existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Amend the zoning regulations to allow for and encourage a variety of housing options for our senior citizens.

The 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development replaces the 1983 Plan of Development. This Plan uses the same component titles as the 1983 Plan and portions of the text from the 1983 Plan are quoted in the appropriate components.

People & Government

The 1990 Census information on population, housing and socio-economic data paints a portrait of Wethersfield for yesterday, today and tomorrow. This information provides a basis for future planning and the recommendations made in the Plan of Conservation and Development Update.

Wethersfield Today

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population of Wethersfield in 1970 was 26,652; in 1980 it was 26,013; in 1990 it was 25,651; and in 1995 it was 25,161. There was a decrease of 362 persons (1.39%) from 1980 to 1990 and a decrease of 480 persons (1.91%) from 1990 to 1995. The most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures for July 1, 1998 indicate a continued decline of 66 persons (.26%), from 25,161 to 25,095 persons in 1998.

While the population has decreased, the number of households has increased. The number of households increased from 9,469 in 1980 to 10,470 in 1990. The increase in the number of households and the decrease in the total population reflects national and societal trends characterized by an increase in the number of separated, widowed, divorced and single, never-married persons. For example, the number of one-person households increased by 33% from 1980 to 1990 and the number of separate, widowed and divorced persons increased by 19%.

Wethersfield Population Growth

Year	Population	Growth	
1930	7,512	—	—
1940	9,644	2,132	28.38%
1950	12,533	2,889	29.96%
1960	20,561	8,028	64.05%
1970	26,662	6,101	29.67%
1980	26,013	- 649	- 2.43%
1990	25,651	- 362	- 1.39%
1995	25,161	-480	-1.91%
1998	25,095	-66	-.26%

Since 1970 the town's growth rate has been slower than that of the state, the Capitol Region and the abutting towns of Newington and Rocky Hill. Wethersfield's growth from 1970 to 1980 was -2.4%, compared to 10.7% for Newington, 31.7% for Rocky Hill, -0.2% for the region and 2.5% for the state. Wethersfield's growth from 1980 to 1990 was -1.3%, compared to 1.2% for Newington, 13% for Rocky Hill, 6.1% for the region and 5.8% for the state.

Comparison of Percentage Growth

	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90
Wethersfield	29.67	-2.4	-1.3
Newington	47.4	10.7	1.2
Rocky Hill	49.6	31.7	13.0
Capital Region	22.6	-0.2	6.1
State of Conn.	19.6	2.5	5.8

According to the Connecticut Population Projections prepared by the Office of Policy and Management, Wethersfield's population will continue to decline over the next few decades.

State Population Projections for Town of Wethersfield	
1990 Actual	25,651
1995	25,640
2000	25,380
2005	24,970
2010	24,590

The town has the largest percentage (22.6%) of elderly (65+) persons and the highest median age (43.0) in the Capitol Region. When compared to the region and the state, Wethersfield has fewer residents in the 0-19 and 20-34 age groups.

Age Distribution (1990 U.S. Census)			
	Town	Region	State
0-19	19.9%	25.6%	25.7%
20-34	19.0	25.2	25.4
35-54	25.5	26.6	26.4
55-64	12.8	9.1	9.0
65+	22.6	13.4	13.6

The 65+ age group has seen the largest increase in numbers of persons, increasing by 28.45% from 1980 to 1990. The 0-19 age group (the school-age group) has seen the largest decrease in numbers of persons, declining by 20.33% from 1980 to 1990.

Changes in Age Distribution (1990 U.S. Census)				
	1980	1990	Change	
0-19	6,419	5,114	-1,305	-20.33%
20-34	4,663	4,893	230	4.93
35-54	6,589	6,549	-40	-.61
55-64	3,822	3,289	-533	-13.95
65+	4,520	5,806	1,286	28.45
Total	26,013	25,561	-362	-1.39

Future Growth by Age Groups

The population projections are useful when planning for future demands for municipal services, educational and recreational facilities and housing.

The school-age populations (persons 5 to 19) will be relatively stable over the next 30 years. The school-age population will peak at 4,751 persons in the year 2000.

The number of young adults (persons 20 to 34), renters and first-time home buyers will decrease over the next few years and begin to increase again in 2010.

The middle-age populations (persons 35 to 64) will remain relatively stable over the next 30 years, close to 10,000 persons.

The elderly population (65+) will peak at 6,387 persons in the year 2000. The presence of this large elderly population, some of them "aging in place," may result in dramatic demands on town services. The departure of some of the elderly from their homes and apartments will open up housing opportunities which could be occupied by young families, leading to a very different population for the future.

Population Projections By Age Groupings							
(1990 U.S. Census)							
Ages	1990 Actual	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
0-4	1,320	1,493	1,246	1,079	1,046	1,119	1,225
5-9	1,249	1,495	1,633	1,399	1,243	1,215	1,295
10-14	1,236	1,393	1,637	1,804	1,571	1,414	1,386
15-19	1,309	1,161	1,305	1,548	1,735	1,519	1,363
20-24	1,460	1,086	941	1,092	1,317	1,487	1,298
25-34	3,433	2,847	2,200	1,891	1,976	2,312	2,631
35-54	6,549	7,006	7,254	6,967	6,412	5,648	5,178
55-64	3,289	2,891	2,775	3,033	3,262	3,524	3,578
65+	5,806	6,268	6,387	6,157	6,028	6,093	6,315
Total	25,651	25,640	25,380	24,970	24,590	24,330	24,270

Who Are We?

Wethersfield is predominantly a community of persons of European ancestry. According to the 1990 Census, 22,485 residents were born in the United States while 3,166 were foreign born. About 8,750 persons claim Italian ancestry, 5,796 persons claim Irish ancestry and 3,494 persons claim Polish ancestry. The following tables indicate the racial, ethnic and sexual composition for Wethersfield, Hartford County and the State of Connecticut.

Wethersfield Racial, Ethnic and Sexual Composition		
(1990 U.S. Census)		
Racial Groups	Population	Percentage
White	25,021	97.54%
Black	293	1.14
Native American	31	.12
Asian/Pacific	200	.78
Other	106	.41
Hispanic Origin	422	1.65
Total Persons	25,651	
Sex	Population	Percentage
Male	11,977	47%
Female	13,674	53%

Hartford County Racial, Ethnic and Sexual Composition		
(1990 U.S. Census)		
Racial Groups	Population	Percentage
White	711,315	83.50%
Black	87,255	10.20
Native American	1,425	.16
Asian/Pacific	13,347	1.50
Other	38,441	4.50
Hispanic Origin	71,575	8.40
Total Persons	851,783	
Sex	Population	Percentage
Male	409,806	48.1%
Female	441,977	51.8%

State of Connecticut Racial, Ethnic and Sexual Composition		
(1990 U.S. Census)		
Racial Groups	Population	Percentage
White	2,859,353	86.98%
Black	274,269	8.34
Native American	6,654	.20
Asian/Pacific	50,698	1.50
Other	96,142	2.90
Hispanic Origin	213,116	6.40
Total Persons	3,287,116	
Sex	Population	Percentage
Male	1,592,873	48.45%
Female	1,694,243	51.54%

Town Government

The New England tradition of governing local affairs through the town meeting represents democracy in the purest form. In practice many towns have found the process increasingly cumbersome and impractical as they grow in size and complexity. Wethersfield found this to be the case and, in 1953, adopted a charter establishing a council-manager government. Thereafter representative government and professional town management have guided the community through two decades of rapid growth, into the relatively stable period of the 1980s and 1990s.

The Town Council

The Town Council consists of nine members elected at large for a two-year term. The Council is the governing body of the town and as such enjoys all the legislative and administrative powers consistent with state law and Town Charter “for the government of the town and the management of its business, and for the preservation of the good order, peace, health and safety of the town and its inhabitants.” (Charter)

Other Elected Boards

Besides the Council the only other elected board performing a general government function is the Board of Education.

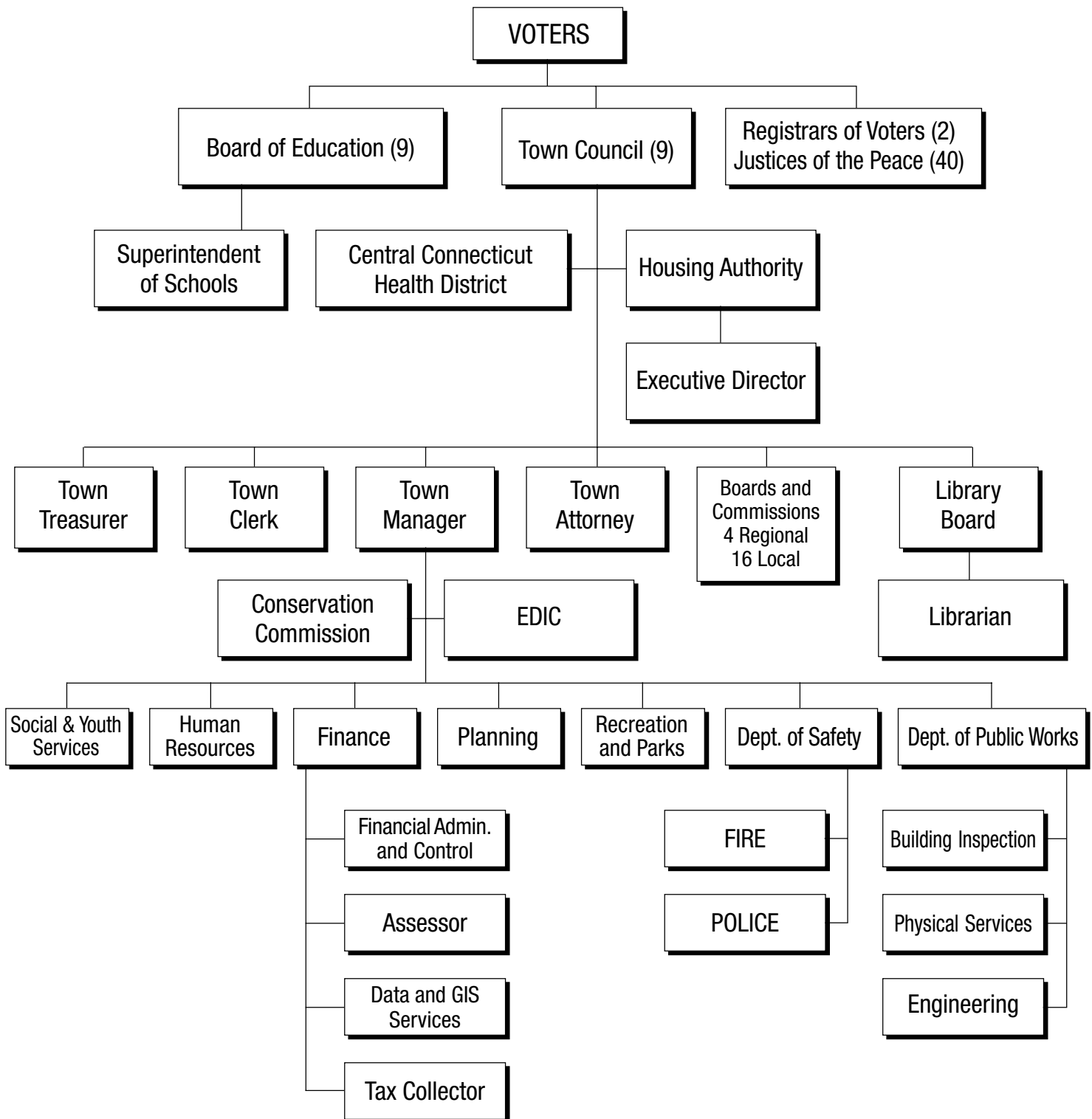
Appointed Boards and Commissions

At present there are 26 standing boards and commissions whose members are appointed either by the Council or by the Town Manager. They fall into three broad categories. Five of these have autonomy as decision- and policy-making bodies: the Historic District Commission, the Housing Authority, the Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission, the Library Board, and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Seven of the 26 hear and decide appeals and complaints, including the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Ethics. The remaining 14 perform advisory functions on such matters as energy conservation and recreation and park programming.

Administration

The town's administrative business is directed by the Town Manager. The Manager oversees seven line departments, three of which are further classified into operating divisions according to specialized roles and functions.

Town of Wethersfield Organizational Chart



Land Use & Zoning

Land use can be defined as the way in which the land is being used. Zoning can be defined as the division of land into designated districts that control the type and intensity of development permitted. Land use and zoning are of special concern in older, developed communities, such as Wethersfield. The proximity of various land uses and zone districts to each other and their relationship can have a dramatic affect upon the quality of life in a community. For this reason, land use and zoning decisions need to be carefully analyzed to protect the quality of life in the surrounding residential areas and to provide the opportunity for businesses to be successful.

Residential

The Town of Wethersfield contains 13 square miles, or 8,389.8 acres of land. The existing land uses in the town were all well established by the 1960s. The town is primarily a residential community with 46% of the land in residential use. About 26% of the land in town is in public and semi-public use, while 23% is in open space, four percent is used for commercial purposes and one percent for industrial purposes.

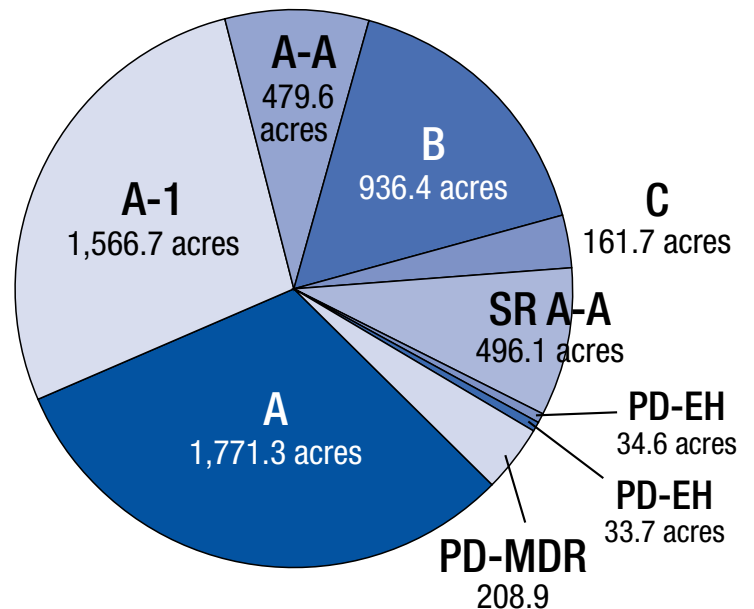
Single-family homes on lot sizes ranging from 5,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet represent the great majority of the town's residential development. The housing densities follow the development pattern of the era in which the housing was built. The densities tend to decrease from north to south and from east to west, away from the town's historic center.

In 1998 the population in Wethersfield was 2,016 persons per square mile, compared to 1,121 persons per square mile for Hartford County and 655 persons per square mile for the state.

The most common type of residential housing unit in Wethersfield is the detached single-family house. Wethersfield is unique in Connecticut, because such a large percentage (79%) of the existing housing units are detached single-family houses. In comparison only 59% of housing units in Hartford County are detached single-family units and only 62% of housing units in the state are detached single-family units.

According to a report titled "Capitol Region Home Sales Price Report" (for July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1999), prepared by the

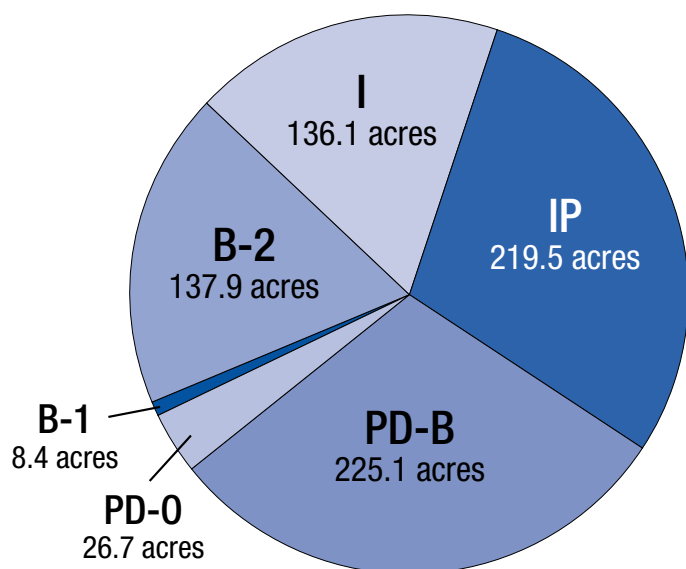
Residential Zones
(tot. = 5,689 acres)



Capitol Region Council of Governments, 543 housing units were sold in Wethersfield during the study period. The total number of units sold included: 92 condominium units, 444 single-family houses, and seven two-family houses. These sales figures emphasize that Wethersfield is and continues to be a popular and desirable place to live. Wethersfield was ranked 10th in the number of sales out of the 29 Capitol Region communities.

There are a number of other land uses permitted in the residential zones. Today in Wethersfield there are state office buildings, the Wethersfield Country Club and family farms located in the residential zones. This category also includes the Town of Wethersfield's 626+ acres of parks. Municipal parks as a percentage of land area in Wethersfield represent 7.4% of the total land area in town. The only town in the Capitol Region with a greater percentage of municipal parks as a percentage of land area is the Town of Farmington, with 9.13%.

Commercial Zones (tot. = 753.7 acres)



Commercial

The major commercial land use in town is retailing. The Commercial zone districts currently occupy about 4.5% (393 acres) of the land area in town. The amount of commercial zoned land decreased by about 29 acres from 1982 to 1997. The major commercial areas were well established by the 1960s. The Commercial land uses are found primarily along the Silas Deane Highway, the Berlin Turnpike and on Main Street in Old Wethersfield. The Silas Deane Highway contains retail shops, banks, medical offices and personal services used by residents of Wethersfield and the surrounding communities. The major commercial retail facilities include the Goff Brook Shops and the Wethersfield Shopping Center on the south end of the Silas Deane Highway and the Silver Cove Shopping Center on the north end of the Silas Deane Highway.

A smaller commercial strip lies along the Berlin Turnpike in the northwest corner of the town. This commercial area contains motels, restaurants and automotive services. The Jordan Lane Shopping Center, in the northwest corner of town serves residents of Wethersfield and the surrounding communities. Smaller and localized commercial areas are found in the historic village center on Main Street in Old Wethersfield and near the older residential neighborhoods to the north near Hartford.

Industrial

The Industrial Zone and the Industrial Park Zone districts currently occupy about 4.23%, (355.6 acres) of the land area in town. The Industrial areas are found in pockets adjacent to the Silas Deane Highway, the Berlin Turnpike and on Burbank

Road between I-91 and the Connecticut River. The major Industrial zoned parcels available for future development include:

- The 69.1-acre Balf property south of Jordan Lane and west of the Berlin Turnpike;
- The 22.1-acre Wethersfield Technology Park on the north side of Wells Road;
- The 10.5-acre Kahn property on the north side of Wells Road.

Flood Plain

The Flood plain zone district currently occupies about 23.2% (1,947.1 acres) of the land area in town. The flood plain zone is located in the eastern portion of town adjacent to the Connecticut River. Large amounts of the flood plain zone are farmed today as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Land Use Trends

The basic land use trend, occurring during the 20th Century, has been spreading residential development and its outgrowth from the original center of Old Wethersfield in directions north, south and west. As with the rest of the nation the most dramatic increase in growth took place after World War II. From 1950 to 1980 56% of all the housing units in Wethersfield were constructed.

The use of land for farming and the amount of generally undeveloped or vacant land has consistently decreased over the years. During the neighborhood meeting process it was suggested that efforts be made to preserve the remaining family farms and open spaces in town. Wethersfield's potentially developable acreage has

decreased with the growth of the town. The developable acreage which amounted to 1,836 acres or approximately 21% of the town in 1972, decreased to 1,202 acres, or 14% of the town in 1982. This figure further decreased to 750+/- acres or 8.9% of the town from 1982 to 1999. Most of this remaining and usable vacant land is located in the west and southwest areas of Wethersfield.

Wethersfield is a mature community with its existing land use patterns well-established. The town is small with limited land resources for future development. Any future commercial or residential development needs to be complementary to the existing residential neighborhoods in town. Given the existing residential neighborhoods, the environmentally sensitive flood plains and wetlands, it is quite clear that the development options here in Wethersfield are rather limited. Any recommendations for future zone changes need to take these issues into consideration.

The Interchange Zone

The Town Council in the winter of 1995 established the Ad Hoc Industrial Development Committee to investigate the development potential of a 90-plus-acre site located south of Maple Street, east of Middletown Avenue and west of I-91 and Elm Street. The Ad Hoc Committee and town staff prepared a draft set of zoning regulations for the site. The site was later named the Interchange Zone, after the title of the draft zoning regulations.

The 90-plus-acre site is located in a Flood Plain Zone District. The proposal called for the zoning regulations to be amended to include the new Interchange Zone Regulations and for the existing zone district classification of Flood Plain Zone to

be changed to Interchange Zone. The Interchange Zone would have been a mixed-use zone allowing by special permit a variety of commercial uses including offices, hotels, conference centers, and limited retail and research and development laboratories.

There were extensive discussions between the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission concerning the Interchange Zone and the most appropriate forum at which to address the issue. It was decided to address the Interchange Zone during the update of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The site was and still is utilized as farmland and is considered by many a prime site for agriculture, open space and economic development. The site possesses economic potential and severe environmental constraints for any future development. The pros and cons of the issues surrounding the development of the site included:

- The site has excellent visibility and potentially good access from I-91, making it attractive as a commercial or office development site.
- The site is located in the 100-year Flood Plain and contains areas of regulated inland wetlands.
- The site is located within the regulated area of the Stream Channel Encroachment Line.
- There would be a significant visual impact associated with a development of any size since the land is substantially open farmland.
- There are about 40 different property owners and this may cause difficulties in assembling the site for development.

The Commission debated the issues surrounding the development of the Inter-

change Zone site in early 1998 at the public hearings for the land use component of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The majority of the residents present at the hearing expressed opposition to any change of zone district classification for the 90-plus-acre site.

The Town Council wanted more public debate on the issue and felt a more participatory approach was needed. The Council passed a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to submit an application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to amend the Zoning Regulations to include a new Interchange Zone District. The proposed amendment would have created the Interchange Zone District regulations as a section of the Town Zoning Regulations. The Interchange Zone would have been a floating zone similar to the Elderly Housing Zone that could be located on any appropriately sized site in town.

Town residents successfully submitted petitions calling for a referendum on the Council resolution to submit the zoning regulation amendment.

The amendment to the regulations would not have rezoned any property or created a particular site for an Interchange Zone District. However, for the purpose of the town-wide referendum the intended site of the Interchange Zone was always implied and widely known in the community. The vote was therefore viewed by many as a referendum on the future development of the Interchange Zone site. The referendum was held on November 3, 1998 and about 63% of the 8,000-plus voters participating in the referendum voted to overturn the Council's action authorizing the Town Manager to submit the proposed zoning regulation amendment.

The area designated as the Interchange Zone is considered by some as a prime site for economic development but as noted above there are environmental constraints to developing the site. The 1983 Plan of Development recognized the limitations placed upon the site by the environmental constraints and recommended that any future development be a low intensity use with substantial lands reserved for farming.

The existing Flood Plain Zone designation on the zoning map and future land use map should be maintained.

Zoning District Boundary Changes

As was previously noted, Wethersfield is a small community with limited land resources. Therefore it is imperative that land in town is put to its highest and best use. There are many under-utilized commercial properties in town and rezoning those properties would result in better utilization. There are residential zoned properties which are no longer appropriately zoned given the surrounding land uses. There is the need to provide a variety of residential living arrangements from single family houses on larger lots to different kinds of elderly housing. The following proposed zone changes reflect these ideas.

Berlin Turnpike – Create a new zoning district on the Berlin Turnpike from Nott Street south to 1912 Berlin Turnpike on the east side and from Nott Street south to Rt. 175 on the west side of the Berlin Turnpike. The existing zone district classifications of Business Zone No. 1, Business Zone No. 2, Industrial Park Zone and A Residence Zone properties should be changed to a Berlin Turnpike Commercial Zone District. This district would have new landscaping, setback, sign requirements and use standards.

106 Nott Street – The site is located on the north side of Nott Street, west of the railroad tracks. Given its proximity to the adjoining residential properties it would be appropriate to rezone from Industrial to Planned Development Office Zone.

91 Nott Street – The site is located on the south side of Nott, west of the railroad tracks. Given its proximity to the adjoining residential properties it would be appropriate to rezone from Industrial to Planned Development Office Zone.

672 Silas Deane Highway and 13 & 25 Wells Road – These properties are located on the east side of the Silas Deane Highway, north of Wells Road and include an existing bank, restaurant and supermarket. The properties are zoned Industrial and should be rezoned to a Planned Development Business Zone.

798-912 Silas Deane Highway – These properties are located on the east side of the Silas Deane Highway and extend south from the Subway Shopping Center to Maple Street. The properties are zoned Industrial and should be rezoned to a Planned Development Business Zone.

1100-1142 Silas Deane Highway – These properties contain 7.92 acres on the east side of the Silas Deane Highway, north of Mill Street and contains the Marshall's Shopping Center and Walgreen's store. The properties are zoned Industrial and should be rezoned to a Planned Development Business Zone.

A-40 Zone – Create a new zone district designation in the southwest area of town. The new zone should be a residential zone district with a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet.

Residential Office Zone – Create a new zone district on the west side of the Silas Deane Highway from Oxford Street south to Nott Street. This area is currently zoned a C Residence Zone. The new zone would allow residential houses to be converted to office use and would require the structure's residential appearance to be maintained.

I-291 Corridor Land – Create a new zone on the parcel of land identified as the I-291 Corridor. The site contains 35+/- acres and is located south of Two Rod Highway and west of Highland Street. The property is located in an A-A Residence Zone. The area should be rezoned to allow for a variety of housing types including elderly housing, with consideration for provisions to preserve areas for open space and recreational uses.

Zoning Regulations

The 1983 Plan of Development stated, "A general review of the Regulations indicates that they are adequate in form and reflect many modern concepts of zoning."

Residential, commercial and industrial land uses have greatly changed since 1983 and as a result the regulations are in need of being updated.

GOALS & POLICIES

Land Use and Zoning Goal:

Achieve a Balance Between Commercial, Residential, Agricultural and Open Space Land Uses.

Policies

- **Encourage the highest and best use of commercial and industrial properties.**
 - Amend the zoning regulations and create new zoning districts to optimize the development and re-development of under-utilized commercial, and where appropriate, residential properties.
 - Encourage multi-parcel development for land uses where appropriate.
 - Encourage the development of combined commercial and residential uses where appropriate.
- **Protect and improve the quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods and allow for new types of residential development.**
 - Fund efforts to improve and enhance the appearance of public lands and facilities.
 - Promote the preservation of the 60-foot Tri-Town Connector right-of-way and encourage the development of elderly housing in the former I-291 corridor.
 - Amend the zoning regulations to permit new types of residential developments, including assisted living and congregate living facilities.
- **Preserve existing open space and agricultural land.**
 - Encourage the use of the 490 Program as a tool for preserving open space, farms and forests.
 - Fund the Town's agricultural land preservation fund in order to purchase development rights or land.
 - Work with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to acquire the development rights for farms and open space.

■ **Amend and update the Historic District, Subdivision and Zoning Regulations to comply with the recommendations of the Policies of the Plan of Conservation and Development, current development standards and changes in the Connecticut General Statutes.**

- Review, update and amend the Historic District Regulations as needed. The Historic District Commission should apply to the State Historic Commission to be designated as a “Certified Local Government.”
- Review, update and amend the Subdivision Regulations as needed and to address changes in the public improvement standards.
- Review, update and amend the Zoning Regulations to address a variety of current uses such as cellular towers, drive-thru windows and new standards for: lighting, required number of parking spaces, signs and trailers and motor homes in residential zones. In addition the format of the Zoning Regulations should be redesigned to be more user-friendly.

■ **The Town should prepare a master plan for the Old Wethersfield Historic District to preserve and enhance the historic assets within the largest Historic District in the State of Connecticut.**

- Extend the enhanced street lighting and brick sidewalks within the Historic District where appropriate.
- Monitor the parking situation in Old Wethersfield and consider alternate parking arrangements or requirements if needed in the future.

Economic Development

The growth and development of a community is influenced by its economic conditions. This component of the Plan of Conservation and Development will analyze existing economic conditions and consider future opportunities for growth and development.

The economic conditions of Wethersfield are closely linked with those of the Capitol Region and the state. Wethersfield is primarily a residential community with its residents commuting to jobs in the Capitol Region area.

The economy of the Capitol Region and the state has changed dramatically since the last Plan of Development was completed in 1983. Manufacturing provided the greatest number of employment opportunities at that time.

Today the service industry is the state and region's major employer. The major employer in the Town of Wethersfield today is the service industry. According to the Capitol Region Growth Council the largest employers in Wethersfield in 1998 were:

- State of Connecticut – 3,000 employees
- Town of Wethersfield – 520 employees
- Northeast Utilities – 395 employees
- Mediplex – 325 employees
- Williams Communications – 108 employees

According to a business profile prepared by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) in 1999, trade (retail and wholesale) was the second largest employer in town, followed by construction and min-

ing; finance, insurance and real estate; and manufacturing. Please note that the profile (below) includes state and town employees in either the service or public administration category.

The importance of retail trade is emphasized by the fact that there was \$140,241,603 worth of retail sales in Wethersfield in 1998 (Connecticut Department of Revenue Services).

The ability of a town to attract new residential and commercial growth is influenced by a wide range of demographic trends including population growth, household formation, income and employment. The age, size and socio-economic characteristics of a town's population determine the amount of disposable income available to support new businesses. A town viewed as growing and prosperous can attract new businesses.

Wethersfield Business Profile				
	Firms	% Total	Employees	% Total
Services	434	41.9	3,135	37.9
Retail Trade	205	19.8	1,798	21.7
Construction	158	15.3	482	5.8
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	96	9.3	787	9.5
Wholesale Trade	52	5.0	461	5.6
Manufacturing	28	2.7	264	3.2
Transportation & Public Utilities	28	2.7	160	1.9
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	22	2.1	86	1.0
Public Administration	12	1.2	909	13.3
Total	1,035	100.0	8,272	100.0

Another factor in attracting new businesses is a highly educated and skilled workforce. The following information and tables present a demographic snapshot of Wethersfield.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population of Wethersfield in 1970 was 26,652; in 1980 it was 26,013; in 1990 it was 25,651; and in 1995 it was 25,161. There was a decrease of 362 persons (1.39%) from 1980 to 1990 and a decrease of 480 persons (1.91%) from 1990 to 1995. The most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures for July 1, 1998 indicate a continued decline of 66 persons (.26%), from 25,161 to 25,095 persons in 1998.

The 1989 median household income in Wethersfield was above the county and state figures. The 1998 median household income in Wethersfield was above the county and below the state figures.

Household Income			
	Town	County	State
1989 Median	\$43,888	\$40,609	\$41,721
1998 Median	\$48,886	\$46,483	\$49,176

The 1989 per capita income in Wethersfield was above the county and state figures. The 1998 per capita income in Wethersfield was also above the county and state figures.

Per Capita Income			
	Town	County	State
1989 Per Capita	\$22,246	\$18,983	\$20,189
1998 Per Capita	\$26,283	\$22,818	\$25,182

Town residents are well educated, with 80% of all residents over the age of 25 having a high school diploma or higher and 28% of all town residents over the age of 25 having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Educational Attainment (1990 U.S. Census)			
	Town	County	State
Less than 9th Grade	9.5%	9.0%	8.4%
Some HS	10.4	13.2	12.3
HS Diploma	30.8	29.5	29.4
Some College	13.5	15.5	15.6
Assoc. Degree	7.3	6.8	6.6
Bachelor's Degree	16.7	15.6	16.2
Graduate Degree	11.5	10.1	10.9

Town residents are employed primarily in professional, administrative, sales and technical occupations. The larger number of administrative and professional workers reflects the large number of public sector and private utility jobs within the town.

Residents' Occupations (1990 U.S. Census)			
	Town	County	State
Professional	17.4%	16.2%	16.5%
Administrative	22.2	19.2	17.2
Prod. & Tech.	16.4	20.6	21.2
Executive	18.4	14.7	15.0
Sales	10.9	12.0	12.0
Service	7.4	11.1	11.5
Miscellaneous	14.0	6.1	6.6

Commuting Pattern

When compared to county and state residents, Wethersfield residents are more likely to drive alone to work and less likely to use public transportation.

Commuting Pattern			
	Town	County	State
Drove alone	80.3%	78.7%	77.7%
Carpool	11.5	11.2	11.2
Transit	3.7	4.3	3.9
Other	0.6	0.8	0.8
Walk/Work at Home	3.6	5.0	6.4

According to the 1990 Census there were 12,768 employed persons living in Wethersfield. The largest number of persons 4,479 worked in Hartford and the second largest number of persons 2,398 worked in Wethersfield.

The Town of Wethersfield is a mature community with long established land use patterns. As was noted in the Land Use Component,

“The Town is primarily a residential community with 46% of the land in residential use, 26% in public and semi-public use, 23% in open space and 4% in commercial and 1% in Industrial uses. The Commercial land uses are found primarily along the Silas Deane Highway, the Berlin Turnpike and on Main Street in Old Wethersfield. The industrial land uses are in pockets adjacent to the Silas Deane Highway, the Berlin Turnpike, Wells Road (State Route 175) and Interstate 91, (I-91).”

The town is small with limited land resources for future development. The mature and developed nature of the town requires any future commercial or residential development to be complementary to the surrounding land uses. The fact that land is such a limited resource in Wethers-

Town Residents Commute To... (1990 U.S. Census)	
Destination	Population
Hartford	4,479
Wethersfield	2,398
Newington	667
Rocky Hill	638
East Hartford	481
West Hartford	454
Middletown	348
Glastonbury	274
Bloomfield	233
New Britain	233

Origin of Commuters Into Town (1990 U.S. Census)	
Origin	Population
Wethersfield	2,398
Hartford	1,365
Rocky Hill	675
Newington	612
East Hartford	571
New Britain	452
Glastonbury	373
Manchester	353
West Hartford	351
Middletown	247

field makes it imperative that commercial property in town is put to its highest and best use.

Economic development can assist in alleviating the tax burden placed upon existing property owners to finance the natural growth in the cost of government and services. Over the years there have been a number of recommendations made, which could be undertaken by the Town to encourage economic development. These recommendations have been incorporated into the Economic Development Component Goal and Policy statements.

GOALS & POLICIES

Economic Development Goal:

Attract and Retain an Appropriate Mix of Businesses for the Purpose of Increasing the Tax Base and Employment Opportunities in Wethersfield.

Policies

- **Promote the development and redevelopment of under-utilized commercial properties.**
 - Establish a low interest loan program to assist businesses in renovating their buildings.
- **Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses to town.**
 - Continue Town efforts to encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and to market the town to new businesses.
 - Amend the Zoning Regulations to permit a variety of home based businesses that will not have an adverse impact on the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.
- **Develop a Tourism Plan for Old Wethersfield.**
 - Establish a Tourism Commission to prepare and implement a Tourism Plan for Old Wethersfield.
 - Promote the historic village concept: arts, crafts, antiques, and retail shop oriented.
- **Enhance the town's visual image as a way to attract and retain businesses.**
 - Amend the zoning regulations to include design guidelines for access, scale, aesthetics and landscaping.
 - Increase public sensitivity towards the importance of appearance.
 - Support the beautification efforts of volunteer groups such as the Wethersfield Beautification Trust.

Transportation

The Town of Wethersfield's transportation system includes streets, sidewalks, parking areas and mass transit systems. The town's transportation system reflects the history and the development patterns of Wethersfield. As was noted in the 1946 Master Plan,

All through two and half centuries Wethersfield remained a little town surrounded by farms, and it was not until after 1910 that a profound change began. With the widespread use of the automobile and the laying down of good all-weather roads Wethersfield in thirty years changed into an overwhelmingly suburban town, where growth and development is an integral part of that of the Hartford Metropolitan Area.

The older neighborhoods are based on a grid street system of narrow streets, with sidewalks on at least one side. The houses and neighborhoods in the center and north end of town were built at the turn of the century at a time when most people walked and used public transportation. These are pedestrian oriented neighborhoods with stores, services, schools, libraries, churches and parks accessible by foot. The new neighborhoods built from the 1950s to today are based upon modern subdivision design with wide streets, sidewalks on only one side of the street or no sidewalks at all.

Today the town's transportation system is automobile-oriented with 103.94 miles of town-maintained roads and 26.33 miles of state-maintained roads.

The Plan of Conservation and Development recognizes the fact that traffic levels will continue to grow and contains recommendations for dealing with the continued growth of traffic volumes in the future.

1983 Plan of Development Recommendations

The Town's 1983 Plan noted that the transportation issues of the day concerned mostly a few problem areas in the roadway system. The Plan noted there were issues that needed to be examined from a wider perspective. Those issues included:

- **The future of the Valley Rail Line.** The 1983 Plan noted that the future of the rail line beyond the then current lease to 1986 was uncertain. The Plan recommended that the right-of-way be preserved so that future rail access is not precluded. The Plan stated, "Preservation of the Valley Line as open space will have the advantage of maintaining the right-of-way in the case that rail service be needed again in the future." *The Railroad is being restored.*
- **Inter-suburban bus transportation.** At the time the plan was prepared there was a concern because of the state policy of trimming back existing bus services rather than entertaining any possible expansion of services. *Bus service has been expanded.*
- **The Route 3 and I-91 interchange.** At the time the plan was prepared the interchange was in the design stage. The

Plan recommended that the funding and construction of the interchange be monitored and supported by the Town. *The interchange has been reconstructed.*

- **The long range circulation needs in the area of Back Lane and Newington's Ancient Highway.** The Plan stated, "There are several policy alternatives for dealing with Back Lane:
 - complete the road to Two Rod Highway;
 - abandon all or part of the unimproved portion;
 - allow development patterns to dictate when and how Back Lane should be improved."

The unimproved portion of Back Lane was abandoned by the Town Council in 1996.

Examination of existing traffic volumes in 1983 did not indicate major problems of congestion within the town. The Plan did note that there were a few missing links in the local road system that if completed, would improve neighborhood and intra-town circulation. The Plan cited Folly Brook Boulevard, Western Boulevard, Olney Road, and Edward Street as several local roads which remain incomplete. The Plan noted that there was little justification for completing the construction of Folly Brook Boulevard. The Plan recommended after conferring with neighborhood groups for their input that the following roads be completed:

- **Edward Street between Brimfield Road and Clearfield Road.** The missing portion of Edward Street has never been constructed but the Town still owns the right-of-way.
- **Olney Road between Brimfield Road and Dale Road.** The missing portion of Olney Road has never been constructed.

The Town has installed a bituminous walkway for use by school children on Olney Road between Brimfield Road and Dale Road.

The above-referenced roads have never been completed.

The Plan noted that most of the accidents in town occurred on the Silas Deane Highway. At the time the 1983 Plan was prepared portions of the Silas Deane Highway had been improved to better accommodate left hand turns and improvements along the highway were in the design stage. The 1983 Plan recognized the need to alleviate the recurring accidents on the Silas Deane Highway and recommended, "As a policy, the Town should lobby for State and Federal funds and for assignment of regional priorities which would allow for timely design and construction of improvements."

The reconstruction of the Silas Deane Highway was completed in the Spring of 1996.

Transportation Infrastructure

Mass Transit

The Connecticut Transit Company currently operates six bus routes through Wethersfield:

- F- Broad Street
- M - Middletown Avenue
- N- Campfield Avenue
- T- Franklin Avenue
- U- Wethersfield Avenue
- X- Buckland Mall

In 1996 Connecticut Transit conducted surveys and developed a profile of the average bus rider in the Greater Hartford area. The average rider is:

- Female
- Under the age of 35
- Earns less than \$20,000 per year
- 41% are employed full-time
- 14% are employed part-time
- Uses the bus to commute to/from work

According to information from Connecticut Transit the bus route with the largest number of riders is the T-Franklin Avenue bus route. The bus route with the largest percentage of riders from the Town of Wethersfield is the U-Wethersfield Avenue route.

Bus service plays an important role in the town's transportation system. The bus routes and the number of trips are all managed by Connecticut Transit. Town staff has worked with Connecticut Transit regarding the location of new bus stops. It was suggested at the neighborhood meetings that efforts be made to develop more attractive and vandal proof bus stop shelters. It was also suggested that efforts be made to better maintain the bus stop shelters. All these efforts would go a long way in enhancing the quality of the bus riding experience.

Dial-A-Ride

Wethersfield's Dial-A-Ride service provides door-to-door transportation to residents aged 60 and over and to persons who are temporarily or permanently disabled and unable to provide their own transportation. The service area encompasses Wethersfield, Newington, Rocky Hill, Glastonbury, East Hartford, Hartford, West Hartford, and UConn Health Center in Farmington. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Requests are taken for all types of trip purposes with priority given to

medical usage, grocery shopping, banking, congregational meal attendance, and educational or instructional classes. Currently there is no charge for these services nor is there any mechanism for solicitation of donations.

The town's Dial-A-Ride program was originally begun around 1975 with a grant from a local service club allowing for the purchase of a van and was administered through the Recreation and Parks Department. Around 1985, the Human Services Department assumed administrative responsibilities for the program which serviced the towns of Wethersfield weekdays and Hartford twice weekly with restrictions as to reasons for usage. In 1994, limited service to Rocky Hill and Glastonbury was implemented. In January '95 the town joined the Greater Hartford Transit District Consortium allowing for expanded hours of operation, an increased service area, and no restrictions as to reasons for use.

Railroad

The former Valley Rail Line extends 10.2 miles from Hartford to Rocky Hill. The railroad line right-of-way is owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and is currently leased to the Central Connecticut Railroad. The Providence and Worcester Railroad Company has purchased the Central Connecticut Railroad and is currently restoring the line through Wethersfield.

The railroad beds are being restored, the track and ties are being installed and the new railroad crossings have been installed on Jordan Lane, Nott Street, Church Street, Wells Road, and Mill Street. The crossing at Maple Street will be installed in the summer of 2001 and rail service could begin in the fall of 2001. The Providence

and Worcester Railroad Company plans on using the tracks for freight trains with an average travel speed of 15 to 20 miles per hour.

Bikeways and Pathways

There are no existing bikeways in Wethersfield today. The Conservation Commission has proposed a bikeway called “Wethersfield’s Heritage Way” be constructed to connect many of the town’s existing recreation facilities and open space areas.

- The eight-mile bikeway will contain 2.5 miles of off-road grassy paths on town-owned land and 5.5 miles on existing roads that will be enhanced with safety signs and road stripping.
- The bikeway will connect open spaces, link the town recreation areas and facilities, accentuate historic points of interest and promote economic development.

Sidewalks

There are 116+/- miles of existing sidewalks in Wethersfield. The Town of Wethersfield Code of Ordinances contains the “Sidewalk Maintenance and Repairs Procedures.” The Subdivision Regulations require the construction of new sidewalks on both sides of new streets greater than 600 feet in length. In general, new sidewalks are constructed as a result of:

- Planning and Zoning Commission Application Process: New subdivisions, new residential and commercial construction, commercial rehabilitation can result in sidewalks being installed or repaired. The developer is responsible for installing the sidewalks.

- Town Construction Projects: Sidewalks are considered in all town roadway construction projects.
- Citizen Requests: Residents can petition the Town Council for installation of new sidewalks. The residents share 50% of the construction cost by assessment.

As shown by the numbers on the following table there has been a steady growth of traffic volume along all the state roads, with the exception of Jordan Lane.

Average Daily Traffic Volume on State Roads in Wethersfield		
State Road	1981	1998
Berlin Turnpike	35,800	40,766
Berlin Turnpike North of Wilbur Cross Parkway	10,000	8,550
Jordan Lane	10,000+	7,875
Prospect Street	10,000+	13,175
Silas Deane Highway	16,100	18,975
Wells Road	10,000+	14,950
Wilbur Cross Parkway	23,600	31,633

Trip Generation

According to the 1990 Census data approximately 11,459 people commute into Wethersfield and 12,497 people commute out of Wethersfield every day to work. The combination of the inbound and outbound commuting traffic generates about 24,227 trips per day.

Existing Roadway Classifications

As was previously noted the Town of Wethersfield contains 103.94 miles of town-maintained roads and 26.33 miles of state-maintained roads for a total of 130.27 miles of roads. The Capitol Region Council of Governments prepared a classification of Wethersfield's roads in 1996. According to the classification the town contains four different levels of street classifications.

Each of the street classifications performs a specific function and provides different levels of access to the abutting land uses. The classifications included Principal Arterial streets, (Interstate, other freeway, non-freeway), Minor Arterial streets, Collector. All other streets not identified are considered Local streets.

■ Principal Arterial Streets

Interstate Highways are limited access, multi-lane, high volume, high capacity roads, designed to provide for and accommodate high speed and long distance travel with relatively few points of access/egress to the local street system.

Interstate 91 is the only interstate highway in Wethersfield. The report identified the Wilbur Cross Highway as other freeway and the Berlin Turnpike as a non-freeway. These two roads were the antecedents to Today's Interstate Highways. Today these connect major development and activity centers within the town to each other and to the interstate highway system. Traffic flow not access to abutting land uses is the priority on these streets.

■ Minor Arterial

The minor arterial connects the major arterial and augments the traffic carrying capacity of the principal arterial system. These streets carry significant traffic volumes but the priority is on access to abutting land uses rather than on traffic flow. The report identifies the Silas Deane Highway, Jordan Lane, the north end of the Berlin Turnpike, Wells Road, Prospect Street, Maple Street and Thornbush Road as minor arterial streets.

■ Collector

Collector streets collect and distribute traffic between arterial and local streets. Collector streets provide a higher degree of access to abutting land uses and a lower level of traffic flow than the higher street classifications. Collector streets in Wethersfield include Ridge Road, Folly Brook Boulevard, Wolcott Hill Road, Hartford Avenue, Nott Street, Church Street, Goff Road, Highland Street, Griswold Road, Two Rod Highway and Hang Dog Lane.

■ Local

While local streets comprise a very high percentage of the town's total roadway mileage today, their main emphasis is direct access to abutting land uses, not traffic flow.

High Accident Locations

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has identified the following locations in Wethersfield as having an unusually large number of accidents (data from 1998) and have the greatest promise of accident reduction and thus give a broad measure of overall needs of highway safety improvements.

High Accident Locations		
State Route #	Location	# of Accidents
Maple Street	Bet. S.D.H. & Spring Street	15
Maple Street	At Middletown Ave.	33
Berlin Tpke.	Bet. Pawtucket Ave. & Jordan Lane SB	28
Berlin Tpke.	Bet. Rt. 15 SB & Nott Street	23
Berlin Tpke.	Bet. Nott St. & Jordan Lane	16
I-91	Bet. Marsh St. & Rt. 5&15 Interchange	106
S.D.H. 99	Bet. Mill St. & Rt. 3 Maple St.	60
S.D.H. 99	Bet. Byrd Rd. & Rt. 175 & Wells Rd.	15
S.D.H. 99	At Rt. 134 & Jordan La. #2	25
Russell Rd.	At Rt. 175 (Wells Rd.)	26

Planned Roadway Improvements

There are a number of major traffic improvements being planned for Wethersfield in the near future.

Town projects include:

Reconstruction of Spring Street, Middletown Avenue and Maple Street, (State Route 3) Intersection

- This project involves the realignment of Spring Street with Middletown Avenue south of Maple Street to provide a signalized four-way intersection.

Middletown Avenue north of Maple Street will intersect with newly re-aligned Spring Street some 200 feet north of the four-way intersection. The purpose of the project is to improve the safety and traffic operations at the intersection with Maple Street to accommodate the Maple Street widening.

The project is scheduled for construction in the year 2001.

Reconstruction of Nott Street

- This project is located on Nott Street between Routes 5 & 15 and Ridge Road, a distance of approximately 2400 feet. The project calls for the roadway to be reconstructed to its 36 foot width, with new drainage, sidewalks, (on at least one side) and landscaping. The vertical curve at Woodside Drive will be lowered to improve sight line. The design speed will be 30 miles per hour.

The project is scheduled for construction in the year 2002.

State of Connecticut Projects include:

Reconstruction of Route 3, (Maple Street)

- This project is located on Route 3, (Maple Street) between Route 99, (Silas Deane Highway) and Elm Street. The project calls for widening Route 3 to four lanes from Elm Street to the Silas Deane Highway with new drainage and landscaping.

The project is scheduled for construction in 2001.

State Projects completed in the last few years include:

- Reconstruction of the Silas Deane Highway
- Reconstruction of the Route 3/I-91 Interchange
- Widening of Routes 5&15 from Route 175 to Nott Street.

Proposed Town Roadway Improvements

The Engineering Department has proposed a number of future roadway improvement projects. They include:

Reconstruction of Intersection Route 3 (Maple Street) and Hang Dog Lane

Maple Street (Route 3) is a minor arterial street and Hang Dog Lane a major collector street near the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill town Line. According to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) the average daily traffic count on Maple Street (Route 3) at the intersection of Hang Dog Lane in 1993 was 9,600 cars.

Hang Dog Lane intersects at a sharp skew angle which limits turning movements, has poor sight-line and is the site of numerous accidents. A triangular parcel of land within the skew, owned by the DOT would be utilized to square up the intersection.

The road section will be reconstructed to meet current DOT requirements. The new intersection alignment will improve turning radii, sight distance, general geometrics, and reduce accidents of people accessing their lanes.

This project will help both Wethersfield and Rocky Hill residents. As the project impacts a State Route intersection, the towns propose to use DOT design services.

Reconstruction of Wolcott Hill Road (Portion)

Wolcott Hill Road is a major collector street and carries north/south traffic immediately adjacent to the Silas Deane Highway (Route 99). It functions as 1 of 3 major north/south connectors and as an alternate north/south route to the Silas Deane Highway and serves a large portion of southern Hartford and distributes traffic to several state agencies, including the State of Connecticut Labor Department. Wolcott Hill Road also connects four major east/west collectors at Jordan Lane (Route 314), Nott Street, Wells Road (Route 175) and Prospect St. (Rt. 287).

The portion of Wolcott Hill Road from Nott Street to Jordan Lane will be reconstructed. The roadway is in disrepair and needs a complete storm-water drainage system. The pavement has failed structurally and needs replacement. Its poor condition creates a riding comfort much less than satisfactory. The roadway is relatively flat and subject to heavy ponding and flooding. There are no drainage structures in this area and no curbing which creates havoc with silting and erosion on the abutting properties along the right-of-way.

This proposal will alleviate ponding and flooding on the travel-way which will improve the safety, rideability and comfort of the traveling public. The abutting property owners will benefit immediately upon installation of an adequate drainage system.

Reconstruction of Willow Street

Willow Street is a north/south connector between heavily traveled Wells Road (Route 175) and Prospect Street (Route 287) and serves as a collector during peak volumes. The average daily traffic count in 1993 was 2,700 cars south of Wells Road and 2,200 cars north of Prospect Street. Willow Street provides direct access to the Webb School Kindergarten facility.

The Transportation Committee approved Willow Street as a rapid obligation project at their January 31, 1996 meeting. This decision was based on the following: deteriorated pavement condition, lack of drainage systems, saturation buildout and direct access to the Webb School. This roadway was proposed for total reconstruction by the State under Project No. 159-55, but was never undertaken.

The portion of Willow Street from Collier Brook north to Wells Road will be reconstructed. The pavement condition is poor and requires complete replacement. Traffic rideability is uncomfortable and at times unsafe due to the poor pavement condition and the lack of proper drainage, utility patches and cracking.

The construction of an adequate storm-water drainage system will eliminate ponding, travel lane flooding and winter icing. Improvements and sidewalk construction will improve the safety for school children.

Traffic Improvements Currently Under Study

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), in conjunction with the Towns of Wethersfield, Newington, Berlin and the Connecticut Department of Transportation, completed a study of the current and future traffic conditions and land uses on the Route 175 (Wells Road) and Route 5/15 (Berlin Turnpike) corridors. The study included recommendations to improve traffic conditions on both Routes and a recommended design for a new bridge and interchange at the intersection of Routes 175 and 5/15.

At the corridor study public hearings residents expressed the opinion that the town has too many state roads with too much traffic. Residents felt the town has suffered greatly because I-291 was never built. The result has been increased traffic on Wells Road (Route 175) and Prospect Street (Route 287). Residents supported the idea of constructing an additional east-west road in town to alleviate existing and future traffic on Wells Road and Prospect Street. The corridor study included the proposed Tri-Town Connector an east-west road to be constructed in a 60-foot right-of-way on the north side of the former I-291 corridor.

Tri-Town Connector Alternative

The Tri-town connector is a two lane roadway (one lane in each direction) that would connect Route 5/15 (at the Main Street/Griswoldville section) with Gilbert Avenue. The alignment for this connector follows the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill town line along the former right-of-way for I-291, that is no longer a planned expressway route. On the western end within Newington, it would utilize the current right-of-way for Griswoldville Avenue. The connector would not have connections to I-91, and would have at-grade intersections with the following roadways:

- Route 5/15 – Wethersfield
- Deming Street – Rocky Hill
- Kitts Lane/Two Rod Highway – Newington
- Highland/Hayes Road – Wethersfield/Rocky Hill
- Maple Street (Route 3) – Wethersfield
- Gilbert Avenue – Rocky Hill

Parking in Old Wethersfield

The increase in retail, tourism and neighborhood activities over the last few years has again raised the question of whether or not there is sufficient parking in Old Wethersfield. Staff prepared an analysis of parking in Old Wethersfield in 1988 and again in 1998.

The 1998 report included an analysis of the existing land uses and the number of parking spaces needed to comply with the zoning regulations. Information on possible sites for additional parking facilities was part of the report. The following sites were identified for further consideration given the following constraints: 1) no property acquisition involved, 2) no building demolition involved, 3) scale down alternatives to fit neighborhood.

- **Expansion of parking in rear of Keeney Center.** This would involve relocating the basketball court. Staff recommends leaving the existing islands, lighting and landscaping and adding an extension to the east of approximately 50 cars.
- **Expansion of existing lot at Old Academy.** Although only 5 additional spaces total can be achieved here, the cost and overall impact is negligible.
- **Expansion of the existing parking lot at the Olsen House.** Thayer Chase had prepared a conceptual plan which increases the parking by 12 spaces, adds landscaping and leaves the existing structure in place.
- **A modest expansion of the parking lot behind Fire Company #1 into a small portion of the "Gardens."** Although staff noted the potential for 176 cars

here by eliminating all the garden plots, we believe a modest expansion of about 18 cars (which impacts just 8 plots or 10% of the gardens) could be created and ease both fire department and business parking demand.

- **Provision of on-street diagonal parking on Marsh Street from the Rose Green west to Main Street** would add 23 spaces. This option would look similar to the Main Street parking, not require right of way acquisition, and in fact is taken from discussions with the architect currently working for First Church to address their parking and circulation.

In total, these five options would add 108 spaces to the existing inventory of Old Wethersfield parking.

The 1998 study concluded that there was sufficient parking for existing uses but that any changes in uses could trigger the need for more parking in Old Wethersfield.

Traffic Calming

During the neighborhood planning meetings concerns were raised about the speed and volume of traffic on town roads and what could possibly be done about it. There were comments made about the speed of traffic on almost every street in town from town roads such as Longvue Drive and Middletown Avenue to state roads such as Prospect Street, Silas Deane Highway and Wells Road.

One of the newest ways to protect the residential character of neighborhoods from undesirable traffic impacts, is through "traffic calming." Today traffic calming has become the buzz word in mu-

municipal planning circles. In reality, these traffic calming techniques are tools of the traffic engineering profession. Traffic calming is simply the application of traffic engineering strategies to reduce the adverse impact of vehicular traffic on residential neighborhoods.

There are two types of techniques that can be used to reduce the volume and speed of vehicles on roadways: active and passive controls. Active physical controls include: speed bumps, speed tables, rumble strips, median barriers, cul-de-sacs, semi-diverters, traffic circles, chokers, interrupted sight lines, neck-downs, chicanes, changes in direction and protected parking. Active controls change driver behavior and are therefore largely self-enforcing.

There is a drawback to the use of active physical controls. The installation of the active physical controls has a financial cost, a possible impact upon emergency and service vehicles and some motorists may be inconvenienced by their introduction.

Passive control devices include traffic signs, traffic signals and pavement markings. Passive control devices such as regulatory signs inform drivers but do not physically prevent their actions. The advantage of passive control devices is that they can be in force at selected times and they do not block access for emergency and/or service vehicles. Passive control devices are most effective in areas where compliance can be expected to be high and enforcement possible.

The following is a brief description summary of commonly used active and passive control devices:

- **Speed bumps** – raised humps in the paved surface of the street that extend across the roadway. Normally they have a height of five inches. Speed bumps are viewed as an unacceptable hazard on public roadways by many in the United States. Speed bumps have also been reported to interfere with snow plowing operations.
- **Speed table** – a raised table in the paved surface of the street that is long enough for both the front and rear wheels of a car to be on top of a table at once, meaning the table is eight to twelve feet long. Speed tables can be comfortably crossed at 15 to 20 miles per hour.
- **Rumble strips** – sections of rough pavement across the road designed to cause a slight vibration that causes the driver to become more alert and or to slow down. Changes in road surface are sometimes objected to by bicyclists and the noise produced by the rumble strips has raised concerns about noise from abutting residents.
- **Diagonal Diverter** – a barrier placed diagonally across an intersection to convert the intersection into two unconnected streets each making a sharp turn.
- **Semi-Diverter** – a barrier to traffic at the intersection of two streets in which one street is blocked, but traffic from the opposite direction is allowed to pass through.
- **Neck Downs** – same in design as semi-diverters but located mid-block.

- **Protected Parking** – a landscaped island projecting out from the curb; the island creates protected parking bays. These are designed to reduce the speed of vehicles.
- **Chicanes** – a form of curb extension which alternate from one side of the street to another.
- **Traffic Circle or Roundabout** – a landscaped island which is usually located at the intersection of two streets.
- **Stop Signs** – designed to assign the right-of-way at intersections with high traffic volumes or high accident rate.
- **Speed Limit Signs** – meant to inform drivers of the speed limit imposed by the local governing body.
- **No Right Turn/No Left Turn Signs** – used to prevent turning movements onto residential streets with or without peak hour limitations.
- **One Way Street Signs** – used to make travel through a neighborhood difficult.
- **Traffic Signals** – can have a dramatic effect on traffic in neighborhoods. Frustrations with delays at arterial signals are a major reason for shortcutting. Operating signal systems to reduce delay, especially at peak periods, can reduce through traffic in neighborhoods.

GOALS & POLICIES

Transportation Goal:

Maintain a Safe, Efficient and Economically Viable Transportation System That Will Assist the Town in Continuing to Grow and Prosper.

Policies

- **Support efforts to expand and improve the local and regional roadway network.**
 - Increase funding for the Pavement Maintenance component of the Capital Improvement Program to improve pavement conditions town-wide.
 - Incorporate the proposed roadway improvements for the intersection of Hang Dog Lane and Route 3, Willow Street from the Collier Brook culvert north to Wells Road, and Wolcott Hill Road from Nott Street to Jordan Lane into the Capital Improvement Program.
 - Reserve the proposed 60-foot Tri-Town Connector right-of-way located in the former I-291 Corridor for future development as an east/west roadway.
 - Work with Capitol Region Council of Governments to update the roadway classification study.
- **Encourage safety on town and state roads.**
 - Implement the use of traffic calming techniques on town roads where appropriate.
 - Work with the State to reduce the rate of accidents at high accident location sites.
 - Encourage the installation of signage for pedestrian safety at crosswalks where appropriate.
 - The Town should work with merchants and property owners to develop and implement improvements to alleviate access and parking issues in the Bliss Market shopping area.
- **Improve and expand all forms of transportation.**
 - Incorporate the proposed bikeway/pedestrian path, “Wethersfield’s Heritage Way,” into the Capital Improvements program.
 - Prepare a town-wide analysis and priority ranking of sidewalks. This analysis would be the basis for recommendations for new sidewalk installation and the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks.
 - Support the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Connecticut Transit Company and the State Department of Transportation efforts to promote and encourage the use of mass transit.
 - Work with the Connecticut Transit Company and with property owners to install new bus shelters in appropriate locations and insure that they are well-maintained.

Conservation and Open Space

The following description of existing environmental conditions in Wethersfield was contained in the 1983 Plan of Development. As was noted in the 1983 Plan, “An understanding of the natural environment provides a firm basis for both sound land use practices and natural resources preservation.”

Geology and Topography

Wethersfield is located in the upper Connecticut River basin. Much of the basin is within the southern part of the Triassic and Jurassic valley, broad central lowland containing prominent basalt ridges. Cedar Mountain, which is adjacent to Wethersfield in the Town of Newington, is one such ridge. Another basalt ridge is found along Ridge Road in Wethersfield. The dark-colored, firm textured, minutely crystalline rock is known as “trap” and is mined throughout Connecticut.

The land surface in the upper Connecticut River basin in general, and Wethersfield in particular, is generally flat or gently rolling. The land in Wethersfield rises from several feet above sea level at the Connecticut River to 310 feet above sea level in the northwestern portion of the town.

Soil

An understanding of soil types and characteristics is very helpful in town planning. The origins and physical properties of soil have, to a great extent, determined the previous land use in given areas and have important implications for future development. Ignoring or misinterpreting the characteristics of soil cover or geological foundations may result in structural failures or higher construction and maintenance costs. Consideration of the engineering properties of the soil present on a site should be an integral part of site design.

The following soil categories based on their form of origin are present in Wethersfield.

- **Terrace Soils Over Sands and Gravel.** These flat to rolling soils occur above floodplains in river stream valleys and are underlain by water-deposited beds of sand and gravel. Nearly all sources of sand and gravel, and many aquifers, are in areas associated with terrace soils. In Wethersfield, the relatively flat and rapidly permeable terrace soils, which present few limitations to development, are found in Old Wethersfield and in the area between Maple Street and I-91. A band of moderately well

drained terrace soils is found to the west of Folly Brook in the central portion of the town.

- **Upland Soils Over Compact Glacial Till.** These soils occur mostly on the tops and slopes of drumlins — hills that were smoothed and elongated north to south by the movement of glaciers. Soils formed over compact glacial till contain an impervious clay layer known as hardpan. This impervious clay layer makes water penetration beyond a foot or two very difficult. Throughout New England, these soils have traditionally been associated with farming since they have a good moisture holding capacity. This tradition continues in the western portion of Wethersfield where the bulk of the hardpan soils in the town are located.
- **Upland Soils Rocky and Shallow to Bedrock.** These soils are thin, rocky and generally underlain by bedrock within two feet of the surface. Rock outcrops are frequently associated with these soils. Small areas are found in the central portion of Wethersfield in association with the basalt ridge that underlies Ridge Road.
- **Floodplain Soils.** Soils of this group occur on nearly level flood plains in stream valleys. They are formed by recent alluvial loamy deposits several inches to a few feet thick overlying sand and gravel layers. These soils are subject to flooding with the lower lying, more poorly drained soils being flooded most often. In Wethersfield, these soils are found in the eastern portion of the town primarily in the Meadows along the Connecticut River.
- **Marsh and Swamp Soils.** These wetland soils are the result of a natural process called eutrophication. Areas of these soils are found in the westerly portion of Wethersfield.
- **Lake Terrace Soils.** Soils of this group occur where glacial lake sediments have accumulated. In most places, the finer textured lake sediments are covered by coarser loamy or sandy material. The permeability rate through the lake sediments is slow. Lake Terrace soils are frequently wetlands. There is a large area of such soils in the central portion of Wethersfield primarily associated with Folly Brook and Beaver Brook.
- **Drainage.** Wethersfield is located entirely in the upper Connecticut River Basin. Streams to the east of the Berlin Turnpike drain directly into the Connecticut River. Cemetery Brook, in the northwest corner of the town, flows north into Hartford and drains into the Park River, a major tributary of the Connecticut River.

The other major streams in Wethersfield are as follows: Folly Brook begins near Dix Road and flows north through the center of Wethersfield into Hartford and then turns to the south, draining into Wethersfield Cove. Collier Brook begins near the Berlin Turnpike and flows southeast into Two Stone Brook which continues to the southeast into Goff Brook. Goff Brook flows to the northeast until it reaches Mill Woods Park. It then turns to the southeast and empties into the Connecticut River in the Town of Rocky Hill. Beaver Brook begins in the northern portion of the town and flows to the south adjacent to the Silas Deane Highway and the railroad. It meets Goff Brook in Rocky Hill.

- **Wetlands.** Wethersfield has an extensive wetland system (see wetlands map). Wetlands are found along all of the town's streams as well as along the Connecticut River. As well as being important wildlife habitat and open space areas, wetlands serve many functions which make them significant adjuncts to development. Perhaps the most important of these functions are water retention and flood control. The broad flood plains along rivers such as the Connecticut are particularly conspicuous in this regard. Upland wetlands retain runoff from surrounding developed areas and gradually discharge it into their outflow streams, thus preventing a rush of water and increased flooding in low-lying areas. The wetland areas are shown in a generalized manner on the Wetlands map.
- **Flooding.** The 100-year flood boundary has been determined for all of the streams and rivers in Wethersfield by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These flood hazard areas are shown in a generalized manner on the Flood Zone map.

Open Space and Recreation

The amount and quality of open space and recreation areas are important factors in the quality of life of a community. The Town of Wethersfield at 13.0+ square miles may be one of the smallest towns in the Capitol Region but it is ranked as the #2 town with municipal parks as a percentage, (7.4%) of total land area.

Wethersfield contains 626 acres of town-owned parks and recreation areas which are a much used and valued town resource. During the neighborhood meetings many residents expressed the opinion that the town needs to better maintain these valuable resources.

Residents also suggested that efforts be made to preserve open space areas, such as farms, wetlands and flood plain areas. The residents also asked that better access be provided to the existing open space areas and parks such as the Connecticut River and the 1860 Reservoir.

The residents also expressed the point that the major type of recreational facility currently lacking in town is a bikeway or pedestrian walkway.

The Conservation Commission has proposed a bikeway/pedestrian path called "Wethersfield's Heritage Way" (see related map) to connect many of the town's existing recreation facilities and open space areas. Wethersfield's Heritage Way would consist of a bicycle/walkway through Wethersfield, occupying both off-road paths on town-owned land as well as existing roadways that will be enhanced with safety signs and road striping.

GOALS & POLICIES

Conservation and Open Space Goal:

Provide a Wide Range of Recreational Opportunities for Residents and
Preserve and Protect the Town's Natural Resources and Open Space.

Policies

■ **Connect open spaces, recreation areas, wetlands and ponds with bicycle /pedestrian paths.**

- Construct the proposed bikeway/pedestrian path known as “Wethersfield’s Heritage Way” to connect many of the existing town’s parks, recreational facilities and open spaces.

■ **Identify, preserve and protect the town’s natural resources including the Connecticut River and its flood plain and other unique geological and archaeological features.**

- Identify and publicize the location and extent of the town’s natural resources.
- Educate developers, property owners and the public as to the value of preserving and protecting wetlands, flood plains and other unique natural features.
- Encourage the use of conservation easements to preserve these features.

■ **Preserve and enhance the town’s existing parks and recreational facilities.**

- Sustain a financial commitment to the expansion, maintenance and enhancement of existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Support local/state/non-profit efforts to purchase the 300+ acre parcel known as Crowe Point for use as a park with handicapped accessible trails and a non-motorized boat launch.
- Encourage the preservation of the 1860 Reservoir and surrounding open space in its natural state and maintain for passive recreational use.
- Support the continued operation and expansion of the Wethersfield Nature Center in its present or future location.
- Provide better pedestrian access between Cove Park and the Connecticut River.
- Update the 1970 Master Plan for Wethersfield Cove.

■ Preserve existing open space and agricultural land.

- Encourage the use of the 490 Program as a tool for preserving open space, farms and forests.
- Fund the Town's agricultural land preservation fund in order to purchase development rights or land.
- Work with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to acquire the development rights for farms and open space.

Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation And Parks Facilities = 507.72 Acres

- **1860 Reservoir** – 67.7 acres containing a pond and adjacent open space.
- **Beaverbrook Linear Park** – 14.3 acres containing a small pond used for ice skating and surrounding open space.
- **Chester, Col. John Grounds (Crest St.)** – .92 acre containing a basketball court and a mini playscape.
- **Cove Park** – 110.6 acres containing the cove, boat launch, parking lot, park grounds, T-Ball fields, picnic areas and soccer field.
- **Farms Village (Cedar Street)** – 8.0+ acres containing a basketball court, playscape, sledding hill and tot lot.
- **Hanmer Park** – 0.7 acre containing a mini basketball court.
- **Harvey Fuller Grounds** – 5.6 acres containing basketball court and softball fields.
- **Mill Woods Park** – 110.5 acres containing baseball fields, a softball field, a basketball court, beach and outdoor pool, picnic areas, playground apparatus, soccer fields, tennis courts, volleyball court and woods for passive recreation.
- **Mitchell, Stephen Mix Grounds** – 3.7 acres containing Little League fields.
- **Old Reservoir Road** – 14.0 acres containing a basketball court and the right-of-way for Old Reservoir Road.
- **Pitkin, W.J. Recreation Complex** – 15.0 acres containing basketball court, Little League field and a playground. The site also contains the Pitkin Community Center, and the Willard Swim Center

with instructional, wading and diving pools.

- **Standish Park** – 10.6 acres containing a baseball field, a basketball court, soccer field, football field, tennis court and a playground.
- **Tanglewood Nature Preserve Park** – 22.70 acres of open space located south of Wells Road and west of Ridge Road.
- **Wethersfield Green** – 13.4 acres containing a baseball field.
- **Wintergreen Woods** – 110.0 acres containing open space and nature trails.

Miscellaneous Town Facilities = 6.57 Acres

- **Keeney Cultural Center** – 1.0 acre containing a parking lot and basketball court.
- **Rear of Firehouse #1** – 2.1 acres containing the community garden plots.
- **Ridgecrest Circle** – 1.67 acres containing a sledding hill.
- **Solomon Welles House & Grounds** – 1.8 acres containing the Historic Solomon Welles House.

School-Related Recreation Areas = 112.21 Acres

- **Charles Wright School Grounds** – 7.86 acres containing a basketball court, a playscape and Little League fields
- **Emerson Williams School Grounds** – 18.54 acres containing a basketball court, a playscape and a T-ball field.
- **Highcrest School Grounds** – 24.05 acres containing a basketball court, Little League fields, a playscape and soccer fields.

- **Silas Deane Middle School Grounds** – 12.51 acres containing two soccer fields.
- **Webb, Samuel Building Grounds** – 14.41 acres containing a Little League field, tennis courts, a football field and a tot lot.
- **Wethersfield High School Grounds** – 34.84 acres containing a baseball field, a football stadium, a running track, a softball field, tennis courts and a soccer field.

Town Open Space (Parcels >4+ Acres) = 30.89 Acres

- **Cider Brook Drive Open Space** – 4.63 acres of open space located at the north of Prospect Street and west of Cider Brook Drive.
- **Two Rod Highway Open Space** – 5.65 acres of open space located on the south side of Two Rod Highway, east of Dennison Ridge and west of Marshall's Meadow.
- **Two Rod Highway Open Space** – 4.71 acres of open space located on the south side of Two Rod Highway, east of Bay Roc Road and west of Amato Drive.
- **Middletown Avenue Open Space** – 15.90 acres of open space located on the east side of Middletown Avenue and south of Casey Lane.

Municipal and State Owned Open Space = 142 Acres

- **Goodwin Park** – 107-acre portion of the City of Hartford, Goodwin Park Golf Course.
- **State Of Connecticut, Department of Transportation I-291 Corridor** – 35+/- acres of undeveloped land.

Privately Owned Open Space = 2,595.5 Acres

- **Cedar Hill Cemetery** – 126-acre portion of the cemetery and open space is located in Wethersfield.
- **Emmanuel Cemetery** – 78 acres of cemetery and open space.
- **Collier Farms Open Space** – 20+ acres of open space located in the Collier Farms development.
- **Goff Road Open Space** – 17.8 acres of wetland located west of the Barrington Village condominiums.
- **Great Meadows Conservation Trust** – 49 acres located in the Connecticut River Flood plain east of I-91.
- **Connecticut River Flood Plain** – 1,898 acres of flood plain located east of I-91.
- **Elm Street (Aka The Interchange Zone)** – 90+/- acres, located on the West Side of Elm Street, south of Maple Street.
- **Kycia Property** – 22+ acres located on the north side of Highland Street across from the Highcrest School.
- **Morgan Property** – 14+ acres located on the east side of Griswold Road adjacent to Mill Wood Park.
- **Pine Acres** – 10+ acres containing tennis courts and two pools.
- **Pyquag Village Association Inc.** – 10.70 acres of open space located throughout Pyquag village.
- **Wethersfield Country Club** – 181 acres of golf course.
- **Wilkus Property On Thornbush Road** – 34+ acres located on the west side of Thornbush Road, north of Robeth Lane.
- **Wilkus Property On Willow Street** – 22+ acres located on the east side and 23+ acres located on the west side of Willow Street, north of Colliers Farm.

Community Facilities

Community facilities and town services play an important role in the overall quality of life in a community. This component of the 1998 Plan of Conservation and Development reviews the recommendations of the 1983 Plan of Development and reports on the status and plans for existing and proposed community facilities.

The 1983 Plan of Development noted that,

Because of the halt in population growth in the last decade there has been little need to expand existing Town facilities. The Police and Fire Departments presently provide adequate service and coverage and the town has an extensive park and recreation system. The Community Center has been able to meet many of the needs of diverse population groups including the elderly. As a result of this situation the master plan does not show the need to provide for future expansion of public services in terms of new sites or significant new construction.

The 1983 Plan did provide concepts for the future development of two specific areas. The first was the Town Hall area, an idea proposed in the 1963 and 1972 plans:

- The Town Hall area plan called for the development of four story office buildings between Wells Road and Nott Street with retail space on the first floor and new landscaping along the Silas Deane Highway.

- New town hall office space would be placed in the new buildings.
This concept was never constructed.

The second concept was the development of a formal recreation area at the 1860 Reservoir:

- A formal recreation area plan for the 1860 Reservoir with limited public access and parking was prepared.
The limited public access and parking was never constructed.

Town Facilities

The Town of Wethersfield grew dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s. The major facility issue at that time was building enough schools to keep pace with the dramatic growth in population. During the 1970s and 1980s town recreational facilities were expanded and improved, the community center was opened, senior housing was built and a new Firehouse #1 was constructed in Old Wethersfield. In the 1990s efforts were made to preserve and enhance the Keeney Cultural Center, the Old Academy building, the Welles House, the Olsen House and the Standish House. Wethersfield High School was extensively remodeled in the early 1990s.

The existing Town Hall/Library/Police Station building was constructed in 1959 when the population of Wethersfield was about 13,000 persons. The Police Department has requested a bond as part of the 1998-1999 10-Year Capital Improvement Program for the construction of a new Police Station.

The Library has over the last few years requested funding for expansion and renovation as part of the Capital Improvement Program. The Town Hall/Library/Police Station building is the community facility issue for the next decade.

Town Government Center

The Town of Wethersfield in 1989 commissioned DuBose Associates Inc. Architects to perform an Architectural/Space Needs Study to determine the adequacy of the existing space at the Town Hall building and projected needs through the year 2000 for the Town Administration, Police Department, Library and Board of Education. Along with assessment of space needs was the charge to determine the best location for each unit.

The existing Town Hall/Library/Police Station building was investigated to determine its ability and suitability for expansion. The site around the Town Hall was also studied to determine its ability to accommodate increased parking. Concurrently, as part of the study numerous sites in town were investigated to determine their suitability for use to accommodate part of the Town space requirements.

The study touched on location acceptability; ability to accommodate required parking, suitability of the proposed project to the neighborhood and various other factors.

The space study team interviewed heads and other key personnel of each unit, section and/or department covered by the study. This study was undertaken to analyze the adequacy of present space and the projected needs to the year 2000. Data gathered from the interviews was compiled

and presented to show projected overall department sites and personnel count.

The study concluded that there was inadequate space for existing and future uses in the existing building. The study contained a number of options for the existing and future space needs of Town departments that have never been acted upon. One highly rated option called for building a new Library on a separate site and constructing a modest addition to the Town Hall. The report noted this option provided the town with a separate and distinct Library, left the Town Hall with the ability for future expansion and did not require an appreciable addition to the Town Hall parking.

The 1972 and the 1983 Plans of Development and the 1995 Strategic Plan all recognized the need to establish a town government center in Wethersfield. The concept of developing a town government center in Old Wethersfield at the site of the Department of Motor Vehicles facility was recommended in the 1995 Strategic Plan. The Plan recommended the Town acquire the sixteen acre site and existing 115,000 square foot main building and outbuildings and consolidate therein all town services. The existing buildings would either be remodeled or demolished and a new town government center constructed in a campus like setting.

The proposal to develop a town government center at the Department of Motor Vehicle facility in Old Wethersfield raises a number of issues:

- Whether the State will ever make the Department of Motor Vehicles facility available to the Town.
- Whether town residents would financially support the acquisition and rede-

velopment of the site as a government center.

- Whether the use of the Department of Motor Vehicles facility for Town offices is the highest and best use of a unique property, which may have commercial development potential.

The 1972 and 1983 Plans of Development called for the expansion of the existing town government center on the Silas Deane Highway. The 1987 Silas Deane Highway Master Plan, prepared by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1987 contained an articulate vision of the expanded town hall facility on the Silas Deane Highway.

The 1987 Master Plan noted,

One of the great promises of new development is the creation of an identifiable Town Center. This concept is important and appropriate for several reasons:

- It will create a central, identifiable place along the highway.
- It will also help mark the important intersection of Church Street and the highway.
- It will complement the public uses, which have been located at this intersection.
- It can also provide an important trend setting example for future development along the highway.

This Plan recommends that the Town pursue the development of a town government center through the acquisition of the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles facility in Old Wethersfield or through the expansion of the existing Town Hall building.

Police

The Town of Wethersfield Police Department is a nationally accredited department and is located on the ground floor of the Town Hall and contains 10,500 square feet of space. The Police Department has 45 officers and 15 full-time and 5 part-time civilian employees. The 1989 facilities study recommended that the Department area be increased to 15,500+ square feet.

According to the Police Department,

The current square footage needs of the Division are critically inadequate by current building design standards when one considers building circulation, public, police personnel, prisoners, records, and supply and equipment storage. The physical condition of our current facility is deplorable, aging materials, water pipe leaks, unhealthy mold spore (resulting from leaks) and general disrepair is abundantly evident.

The current architectural standard for police facility space needs for a department of our size is approximately 400 square feet per person. Our department's full-time equivalent staffing is sixty persons. Using that standard, a facility of 24,000 square feet would meet only our current needs. Our current facility totals approximately 10,500 square feet (Dubose Associates 1989 study).

Police Department space needs have reached critical mass. This issue must be highly prioritized and addressed now.

The following locations offer possible sites for a free-standing Police Station/ Public Safety facility:

- The combined sites of the Moeller Home, (2.58 acres) at 156 Prospect Street and the Ambulance facility, (1.34 acres) at 206 Prospect Street.
- The former Stillman School property, (6.15 acres) at 127 Hartford Avenue.
- The former Pratt & Whitney training facility, (3.52 acres) at 250 Silas Deane Highway.
- There are four 2+ acre lots in the former Wethersfield Industrial Park on Progress Drive.

An alternative to a new free standing Police Station/Public Safety Facility would be an enlarged station within an expanded and renovated Town Hall building. The construction of a stand alone library building as recommended by the 1989 study would make available for Town Hall office and Police Station use an additional 21,500 square feet of space. A new relocated and expanded Police Station could be constructed in the present library location. There are a number of reasons why an expanded Station in its current location is ideal:

- The existing Station is centrally located and has immediate access to the Silas Deane Highway, the Department's primary service area.
- The existing Station is accessible to the Berlin Turnpike and most of Wethersfield via the Silas Deane Highway.
- The construction of a new Police Station in any other part of town may likely trigger a great "Not in My Backyard" debate.

The need for a new Police facility sooner rather than later became apparent to the Town Council in the winter of 1999. The Council appointed a committee consisting of four former mayors to determine the need for a new police facility and an appropriate location. The committee was

told to balance the need with the Town's ability to pay, and to make a recommendation in the best interest of the community.

The committee hired an architectural firm to conduct a space needs assessment, site evaluation, schematic design, project budget, final report and presentation. The space needs assessment determined the present and future needs of the police facility to be 27,000 square feet. The architect along with the other two architectural firms interviewed by the committee concurred that expanding the police facility at town hall was neither cost effective or structurally feasible.

The Town Council acted on a recommendation from the committee to purchase 250 Silas Deane Highway as the site for the new police facility. A bond referendum was held in November of 1999 and residents approved the decision to purchase 250 Silas Deane Highway and construct a 27,000 square foot Police facility at the site.

Library

One of the recommendations in the 1989 Town Facility Expansion Study Report was the construction of a new library at another Silas Deane Highway site. In addition to creating an additional 21,500 square feet of space for Town Hall and Police use the report noted the following advantages of a free-standing building:

- Total new construction of the library and its design freedom can produce a more efficient and functional facility with the desired image.
- A separate Library building on its own site would give a sense of identity and prestige to an essential town service.

- The availability of grant money for construction.

The study included a number of possible sites for a free-standing library building. One recommendation called for the construction of a two and a half story, or three story, 40,000 square foot library building on a town-owned 2.03-acre site located at the corner of Somerset Street, Belcher Road and the Silas Deane Highway.

The relocation of the Police facility and approval of funding to remodel the Town Hall has created new opportunities for renovating and expanding the existing town hall office and library space. The town offices currently in the lower level under the library will be relocated to the space formerly occupied by the Police facility.

The lower level under the library will be renovated to accommodate the library's children's collections and programs. As part of the renovation an elevator will be installed to provide handicapped accessibility to town hall.

Fire

The Town of Wethersfield is served by the oldest volunteer Fire Department in the United States. The Department has over 92 volunteer members and maintains three stations:

- Station #1 on Main Street in Old Wethersfield
- Station #2 on Griswold Road in Griswoldville
- Station # 3 on Kelleher Court in the Greenfield neighborhood.

The 10-year Capital Improvement Program for the Fiscal Years 1998-99 through

2007-08 includes a bond request for a new Fire Station #1 facility.

Town Garage

The Physical Services Department and the town garage are located at 100 Marsh Street. The 6.67-acre site contains a 6,968 square foot single-story building and a 14,258 square foot two-story building. The garage is responsible for maintaining all town vehicles with the exception of the Board of Education vehicles.

The site contains the Physical Services Department offices, the town garage, trash transfer station, the dog pound, the Police Department vehicle impoundment area, the eviction storage area, parking area for Board of Education buses and the Social & Youth Services Department climbing wall. The site also contains the central fuel depot and the storage area for plows, sand spreaders, sand, salt and other miscellaneous highway equipment.

The site serves a wide range of uses and space at the site is beginning to be at a premium. This plan recommends that a facilities management plan be developed to make the best use of the site.

Schools

The Wethersfield Public Schools is a kindergarten through grade 12 school district of 3,406 students as of Oct. 1, 1999 with:

- Nationally-recognized/award-winning schools
- Experienced and dedicated staff
- Rigorous instructional programs at all levels
- Neighborhood elementary schools
- Active parental involvement

- Outstanding cultural arts programs
- Responsive services for special needs students
- Comprehensive and competitive athletic teams
- Well-maintained schools and grounds

The present school enrollment is served in seven school buildings.

School Enrollments			
Schools	(as of Oct. 1, 1999)	Grade	Enrollment
Webb Kindergarten Center		K	293
Alfred W. Hanmer Elementary School		1 - 6	419
Charles Wright Elementary School		1 - 6	326
Emerson-Williams Elementary School		1 - 6	394
Highcrest Elementary School		1 - 6	450
Silas Deane Middle School		7 - 8	544
Wethersfield High School		9 - 12	980

The school enrollment peaked at about 6,000 students in the late 1960s and continued to decline until the early 1990s. The student enrollment has steadily increased since 1991.

Faced with a decline in pupil enrollment in the 1970s, the Wethersfield Board of Education established a citizen committee on June 8, 1976, to study future school building utilization. This study and subsequent analyses completed by the school administration led to:

- The closing of three elementary schools (Greenfield in June, 1978; Mitchell in June, 1979; and Fuller in June, 1981, in addition to the Lancaster and Chester Schools that had already been closed).
- The closing of the Webb Junior High School in June, 1982, and the establish-

ment of a grade 7-8 middle school program at the Silas Deane Middle School in September, 1982.

- The transfer of grade 9 to Wethersfield High School in September, 1982.
- The conversion of the former Webb Junior High School building into an educational, administration and resource center in November, 1982.
- The Webb Building was designated to serve future enrollment needs especially at the elementary school level.
- The Webb Building currently serves as the site for the district wide kindergarten program, the specialized instructional program for high school age students and is the site of the School District administrative offices.

The 10-year Capital Improvement Program for the Fiscal Years 1998-99 through 2007-08 includes a bond request for an engineering study, design and construction code improvements/building expansion for the Silas Deane Middle School. There have been discussions concerning an expansion of the middle school.

In January of 1999, the Board of Education — in an effort to determine whether the existing facilities will be sufficient to meet the educational needs of the future — requested that the New England School Development Council, (NESDEC) develop a Long Range School Facilities Master Plan.

The scope of work included an analysis of the present and projected future needs of school facilities in Wethersfield. The NESDEC Project Team visited all of the schools in session, conferred with school and town officials, real estate and development professionals and collected and analyzed a substantial amount of school and municipal data.

The NESDEC Project Team developed enrollment projections, determined operating capacities of each school relative to current and projected program needs and assessed the condition of existing facilities. The final report identified the problems facing the Board of Education over the next decade and provided recommendations to address the following issues:

- The study projects an increase of 480 to 600 elementary students over the next decade.
- There is a projected decrease of 58 middle school students (7th & 8th grades) and a small increase of 56 high school students (9th-12th grades) over the next decade.
- Address the isolation of the kindergarten center.
- Provide space for the establishment of a full-day kindergarten program.
- The Silas Deane Middle School is in need of substantial renovation.
- The continued growth of athletic programs at the high school will require additional athletic fields.

The Board of Education anticipates making decisions in the spring of 2000 to address future program and school facility needs.

Senior Center

The Pitkin Community Center was designated in the fall of 1999 as the focal point for senior services and as the center for the disabled in the Town of Wethersfield. Recreational activities and social service programs are offered at the center for seniors.

Utilities

As was noted in the 1983 Plan, utilities in Wethersfield are handled at a regional level. Water supply and sewage disposal is the responsibility of the Metropolitan District Commission (M.D.C.). Its water supply and sewage disposal capabilities are more than adequate to handle any future growth in Wethersfield.

Refuse collection in town is localized and disposal is handled at a regional level. Wethersfield participates in the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority's (CRRA) garbage disposal facility at the HELCO site in Hartford's South Meadows.

GOALS & POLICIES

Community Facilities Goal:

Improve and Update As Needed the Quality of Town Buildings

Policies

■ **Support efforts to create a town government center.**

- Acquire the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) building and property in Old Wethersfield and consolidate therein all town services.
- Alternately, if the DMV building is not acquired the existing Town Hall building would be expanded and renovated as part of a new town center concept around the existing facility.
- The town center concept includes the development of a freestanding Library building.
- The town center would include a relocated and expanded police station in the present library location.

■ **Address the space needs of town facilities for more effective delivery of services to town residents.**

- Make appropriate use of or consider removal of the buildings at:
- The Moeller Home building and/or site.
- The Stillman School building and/or site.
- Prepare a facilities management plan to make better use of the town garage buildings and site.

Housing

Wethersfield grew rapidly during the post World War II era with the majority of the single-family houses in town being constructed between 1950 and 1980. The 1970s and 1980s saw the continued development of single-family houses and the development of condominiums and housing for the elderly. During the 1990s apartments were built and construction of single-family houses continued with houses getting larger and larger. Today Wethersfield is a developed residential suburb with only a few small areas of undeveloped land.

The 1983 Plan of Development proposed several basic housing policy issues which were addressed by the Town. The issues were:

- **Housing character and density:** The PZC continued to support the zoning concept of single-family houses on modest sized lots.
- **Housing cost and efficiency:** The PZC continued to support the development of attached multi-family housing.
- **New construction:** The PZC approved developments where housing densities remained the same as abutting zones but where feasible encouraged the preservation of streams and wetlands.
- **Housing conservation:** Town supported the renovation and preservation of Westfield Heights as a moderate income housing project.
- **Conversion and adaptive reuse:** The PZC approved the adaptive reuse of school buildings for housing.

- **Accessory apartments:** The PZC amended the zoning regulations to permit accessory apartments.

Existing Housing Conditions

The Town of Wethersfield is primarily a residential community with about 67.2% of the land area, (5,785 acres) in town currently zoned for residential use. Single-family homes on lots ranging from 5,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet represent the great majority of the town's residential development. The housing densities follow the development pattern of the era in which the housing was built.

The densities tend to decrease from north to south and east to west away from the historic center of Old Wethersfield.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census data 74% of the town's 10,470 housing units were single-family houses. The majority of those single-family homes (79%) were owner-occupied. Wethersfield's dramatic growth in population and housing is representative of the post-World War II suburban boom. The majority (56%) of the single-family homes in Wethersfield today were constructed between 1950 and 1980.

Since 1970 the town's population has decreased while the number of households has increased. The number of households increased from 9,469 in 1980 to 10,470 in 1990. The increase in the number of households and the decrease in the total population reflects national and societal trends

characterized by an increase in the number of separated, widowed, divorced and single, never-married persons. For example, the number of one-person households increased by 33% from 1980 to 1990 and the number of separated, widowed or divorced persons increased by 19%.

The town has the largest percentage (22.6%) of elderly persons 65 years and older, and the highest median age (43.0) in the Capitol Region. When compared to the region and the state, the town has fewer residents in the 0-19 and 20-34 age groups.

However, as was pointed out at the neighborhood meetings, the departure of many of the elderly from their homes and the recycling of these houses by young families is an ongoing process which will lead to a very different population in the future.

Multi-family housing developments constructed in Wethersfield since 1983 include the following apartment and condominium developments:

Apartments

- **AHEPA Housing:** 41 rental units, (elderly) at 1532 Berlin Turnpike.
- **Executive Square:** 196 rental units, (elderly and handicapped at 100 Executive Square.
- **Fuller Elderly Housing:** 32 rental units, (elderly) in the former Fuller Elementary School building.
- **Mitchell Housing:** 65 rental units, (elderly) in the former Mitchell School building.
- **Village at Wethersfield:** 294 rental units, (market-rate) at 1500 Berlin Turnpike.

Condominiums

- **Brandywine Village:** 42 units on 8.3 acres on Barrington Drive located on the west side of Goff Road.
- **Collier Farms:** 83 single, duplex and triplex units on 41.43 acres located on the north side of Prospect Street.
- **MillPointe:** 40 units on 1.32 acres located on the north side of Mill Street.
- **Tabshey Court:** 33 units on 4.9 acres located on the south side of Jordan Lane.
- **Taylor Lane:** 6 single-family units on 2.02 acres on the north side of Spring Street.
- **The Crossings:** 172 single, duplex and townhouse units on 30.38 acres located on the east side of Russell Road.
- **The Ridge:** 30 units on 2.74 acres located on the east side of Ridge Road.

Existing Housing Stock

The Town of Wethersfield has traditionally been a community of single-family homes. The 1928 Plan of A Residence Suburb Development noted, “Wethersfield promises always to remain a residence suburb.” The owner-occupied single-family house is the most common type of housing in Wethersfield. The town has a higher percentage of detached single-family houses and a lower percentage of attached single family houses and multi-family dwelling units when compared to Hartford County and the state of Connecticut.

The following table lists the housing types, unit tenure and occupancy by town, county and state.

Wethersfield Housing Types (1990 U.S. Census)

Housing Types	Town	County	State
Single-Family Detached	74.3%	52.5%	56.6%
Single-Family Attached	4.2	5.6	5.3
2-4 Units	9.4	18.3	18.4
5-9 Units	1.2	6.8	5.7
10+ Units	9.7	14.7	11.7
Other	.9	1.8	2.3

The Town of Wethersfield has more owner-occupied housing, less renter occupied housing and a lower vacancy rate when compared to Hartford County and the state.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census Data there were 10,790 housing units in Wethersfield. The median age of the housing units is 40 years, (1958). The oldest housing units are in Old Wethersfield, the largest historic district in the state. The newest housing

Housing Unit Tenure & Occupancy (1990 U.S. Census)

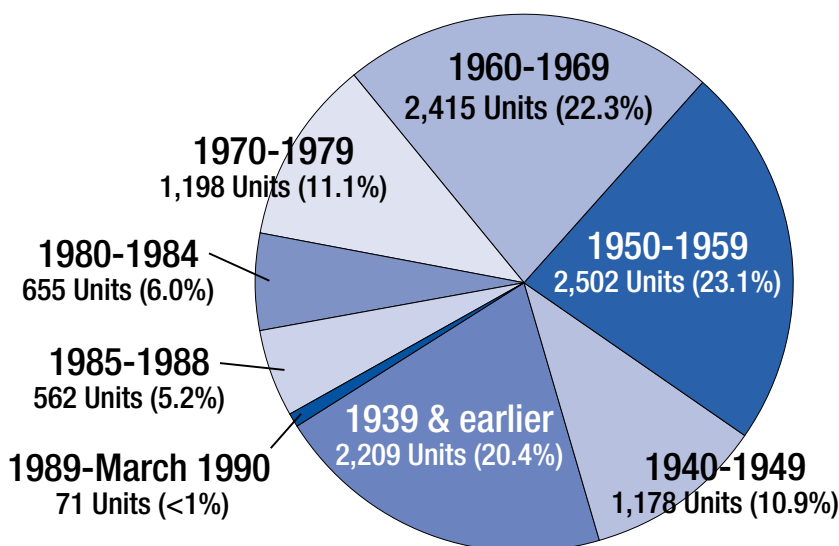
	Town	County	State
Owner Occupied	79.5%	62.7%	65.5%
Renter Occupied	19.9	37.2	34.3
Vacant	5.0	8.4	8.8

units are located in the southwest corner of town. The pie chart below indicates the age of housing in Wethersfield. The decade with the most units constructed was 1950 to 1959. The majority of the housing units (56%) were constructed between 1950 and 1980.

Housing Activity

Wethersfield has not suffered from the dramatic swings of the housing market as other communities have. Housing development has been steady since 1980, with 461 single-family houses built from 1980 to 1990 and 431 single-family houses built from

Age of Housing (based on 1990 U.S. Census)



New Residential Buildings	
July 1, 1980 - June 30, 1990 (Wethersfield Building Department)	
Year Built	# Single-Family Buildings
July, 1980 - June, 1981	45
July, 1981 - June, 1982	41
July, 1982 - June, 1983	35
July, 1983 - June, 1984	78
July, 1984 - June, 1985	29
July, 1985 - June, 1986	81
July, 1986 - June, 1987	47
July, 1987 - June, 1988	58
July, 1988 - June, 1989	21
July, 1989 - June, 1990	26
Total	461

New Residential Buildings	
July 1, 1990 - June 30, 1999 (Wethersfield Building Department)	
Year Built	# Single-Family Buildings
July, 1990 - June, 1991	18
July, 1991 - June, 1992	29
July, 1992 - June, 1993	28
July, 1993 - June, 1994	41
July, 1994 - June, 1995	47
July, 1995 - June, 1996	85
July, 1996 - June, 1997	64
July, 1997 - June, 1998	84
July, 1998 - June, 1999	35
Total	431

1990 to 1999. The average annual number of sales from 1990 to 1999 was 379 units per year. The steady pace of housing construction and sales emphasizes Wethersfield as a desirable place to live. The table above indicates the total number of single-family homes constructed for each fiscal year from July 1980 to June 1999.

Affordability

According to the "Capitol Region Home Sales Price Report," dated January 2000, the number of home sales in the region declined markedly during the early to mid-1990s, but has been increasing steadily since then: 6,172 transactions were recorded in 1992, compared to 10,592 in 1999. The number of sales in 1999 increased by 7.3% from 1998. The steady increase in home sales during the late 1990s

indicates there is substantial real estate activity in the region.

A report issued by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development in February of 1999 listed the qualified affordable housing inventory in Wethersfield as 874 units or about 7.8% of the local housing inventory, (11,209 units). The affordable inventory includes:

- Assisted Family Rental Units 657
- CHFA Mortgages 217
- Total: 874**

As the "Capitol Region Home Sales Price Report" emphasizes:

Since the late 1990s, favorable home mortgage interest rates have helped make home ownership more affordable for some. Mortgage rates have de-

creased since 1991 when the average rate was 10%; in late 1999 rates ranged from 7 to 8%. However, a range of factors such as income, savings, debt load, and obtainable financing terms determines the affordability level for an individual household.

Housing Issues

The large number of senior citizens in Wethersfield, their family orientation and their desire to stay “in town” emphasizes the need to expand the housing opportunities for this large segment of the community. The zoning regulations currently allow for only one type of senior housing, apartments for self-sufficient seniors, in a Planned Development Zone – Elderly Housing. If the town is to encourage a variety of housing opportunities for senior citizens the zoning regulations will need to be amended.

Today, housing for senior citizens can cover a wide range of services. The housing types offered can be defined by the level of assistance offered. It may range from housing designed to promote ease of living and access to housing providing daily meals and entertainment to support of normal daily activities. These senior housing types include:

- Independent retirement housing
- Assisted-living facilities
- Continued care retirement facilities
- Nursing homes

GOALS & POLICIES

Housing Goal:

Support Efforts to Maintain a Variety of Housing Opportunities for Residents

Policies

■ The Town should support efforts to maintain existing housing for seniors and encourage the development of new housing types for seniors.

- Support the efforts of the Housing Authority to maintain quality housing for seniors.
- Amend the zoning regulations to allow for and encourage a variety of housing options for seniors and extended families.
- Encourage the development of elderly housing in part of the former I-291 corridor.

■ The Town should support efforts to maintain and expand the stock of affordable housing available in Wethersfield.

- Support the Housing Authority's efforts to continue renovation of its aging housing stock.
- Continue efforts to establish a low-interest housing rehabilitation loan program for single-family homeowners through the State of Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program.
- Continue to participate in the Tri-Town Home Ownership Assistance Program, which helps eligible households to purchase their first home.



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